

Original Paper

An Analysis of the Evolution and Influencing Factors of Finland's Immigration Policy

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Abstract

Since the late 1970s, a large influx of immigrants and asylum seekers has profoundly transformed Finland's population structure and social governance paradigm, leading to a historic shift in Finland's role from a traditional source of migrants to a modern recipient of immigrants. Looking back over its more than 100-year evolution, Finland's immigration integration policy has undergone a process of institutional change, from "endogenous forced assimilation" in the early years of its founding, to "multicultural exploration" in the post-Cold War era, to "structural integration" within the welfare system framework in the early 21st century, and finally to the current "instrumental contraction" characterized by populism and security. This policy trajectory of upheaval and shift is not purely an evolution of administrative techniques, but rather a result of multiple intertwined causal mechanisms, including geopolitical defensive psychology, macroeconomic cycle fluctuations, the inherent exclusive tensions of a universal welfare state, and the polarization of party politics. This article, from a historical institutionalist perspective, systematically reviews the evolution of Finland's immigration policy since independence and deconstructs its underlying multidimensional dynamics, aiming to reveal the governance dilemmas and historical challenges faced by modern welfare states in the face of national identity, the aging population crisis, and the impact of globalization.

Keywords

Finland, immigration policy, structural integration, welfare chauvinism, securitization, historical institutionalism

1. From Independence in 1917 to the Late 1980s: "Endogenous Assimilation" and "Exogenous Rejection" under Nation-State Construction

From Finland's declaration of independence in 1917 to the late 1980s, over a historical period of nearly seventy years, Finland did not actually construct a modern, legalized, and systematic system of

immigration policies. This policy vacuum during this long historical period was essentially determined by Finland's strong need for nation-state construction and its closed geopolitical environment. During this period, Finland's public administration logic did not focus on how to accept and integrate external populations, but was rooted in a profound inertia of "assimilationism" and "security control." This policy inertia stems primarily from two historical experiences: first, the harsh suppression of indigenous ethnic minorities in the early years of the nation's founding; and second, the tradition of absolute defensive administration during the two World Wars in dealing with sporadic influxes of foreign refugees.

From the outset of independence, Finland's national will was highly focused on cultivating a "Finnish" identity—a unity of language, culture, and national identity—to solidify its fragile national sovereignty and defend against potential external geopolitical threats. For those not belonging to the mainstream ethnic group, the government adopted a radical assimilation policy, attempting to completely dissolve their heterogeneity within a singular nation-state narrative. For example, the Sami people, the indigenous people of Lapland, and the Roma people, who have long resided within the country, were subjected to extremely harsh linguistic indoctrination and educational control by the Finnish government in the mid-20th century. Through the establishment of a highly centralized boarding school system, the government forcibly separated Sami children from their mother tongue and traditional nomadic cultural environment, implementing a complete "Finnishization" education. This model of "forced assimilation" of marginalized minority groups became the underlying code of early Finnish public administration, naturally extending to a preconceived attitude towards immigrants—that any non-native element was viewed as an "outsider" to be swallowed up by the mainstream culture, rather than as a member of society with a dominant position.

After World War II, the Iron Curtain of the Cold War fell on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, placing Finland at the strategic outpost of the US-Soviet confrontation. Constrained by its unique international situation (i.e., the geopolitical phenomenon of "Finnishization"), Finland had to maintain a high degree of strategic caution towards the Soviet Union, both politically and economically. This passive defensive posture resulted in a long-term semi-closed social structure, severely restricting international exchanges and cross-border population movement. In this repressive macro-environment, Finland was not a destination for immigrants, but rather a typical country of population outflow. In 1954, the Nordic countries signed the Nordic Common Labour Market Agreement, an institutional arrangement originally intended to promote regional integration, which objectively accelerated the loss of Finland's cheap labor force. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, due to Finland's lagging infrastructure development, singular industrial structure, and nascent social welfare system, tens of thousands of Finnish laborers crossed the Gulf of Bothnia to seek a living in Sweden, a more industrialized country with better wages, forming the famous post-war Finnish emigration wave.

This large-scale net outflow of population resulted in a severe lack of motivation for the Finnish government, both subjectively and objectively, to build an immigrant reception system. At this time, the

management of foreigners was not handled by the social welfare department, but was entirely dominated by administrative and security agencies under the Ministry of the Interior and the police force. Foreigners were strictly categorized as targets of security precautions and surveillance. In the administrative logic of this period, the very few foreigners who entered Finland through marriage or special political reasons were completely excluded from the national welfare system. The state neither provided language training nor vocational support, but instead pursued a passive isolation strategy intertwined with “administrative exclusion” and “one-way assimilation.” This reflects the extremely fragile multicultural tolerance of Finnish society at the time. Essentially, it was a typical self-protective mechanism adopted by a late-developing welfare state in its early stages to maintain absolute homogeneity in the allocation of limited internal resources.

1.1 The 1990s: Geopolitical Upheaval, the End of the Cold War, and the Establishment of a “Passive” Immigration Receiving Country

The 1990s were a period of radical transformation in Finland’s national destiny and immigration history. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 not only ended the global Cold War geopolitical landscape but also propelled Finland, situated on the geopolitical front, into a vortex of profound change. The removal of the Cold War geopolitical shackles, on the one hand, broke down Finland’s long-standing semi-closed social boundaries, accelerating its integration into the Western European multilateral framework (such as its formal accession to the EU in 1995); on the other hand, it forced Finland, without any institutional reserves, to hastily accept the large-scale transnational population surge triggered by the aftershocks of geopolitics. Finland thus achieved a passive transformation from a “population-exporting country” to a “passive immigration receiving country.” The primary channel for population influx during this period was the “returnee policy,” which reconstructed discourse around national identity. In 1990, then-Finnish President Mauno Koivisto, based on historical ethnic ties and humanitarian considerations, announced that Ingrian Finns residing in the former Soviet Union would be granted “Returnees,” allowing them to return to Finland. This executive order instantly triggered an unprecedented wave of immigration that lasted for several years. However, a deeper examination by historical institutionalism reveals that after more than half a century of Soviet rule and ideological indoctrination, these “returnees” had already become highly Russianized in their language habits, value paradigms, and lifestyles. Their concentrated influx not only severely tested the limits of Finland’s grassroots public administration but also constituted a comprehensive deconstruction of Finland’s traditional “ethnic homogeneity” boundaries: the public and decision-makers were forced to confront a profound historical paradox—blood relatives had become de facto “others” in cultural practice, and the state should regard them as “returning relatives” or “foreign immigrants”? Almost simultaneously, another, more heterogeneous external shock completely shattered the homogeneous cultural foundation of Finnish society. Influenced by international humanitarian crises such as the Somali Civil War, the Iraqi unrest, and the Yugoslav Wars, tens of thousands of asylum seekers crossed the border into Finland. Compared to the sporadic arrivals of Europeans in the past, these refugees presented a

comprehensive divide from traditional Finnish society in terms of race, skin color, religious belief (primarily Islam), and customs. Even more critically, this historic wave of immigration coincided with Finland's most severe economic depression in modern history, triggered by the loss of the Soviet market and a severe banking crisis. Soaring unemployment, public finance deficits, and the skyrocketing costs of refugee resettlement triggered a violent chemical reaction in the lower strata of society, directly igniting the first wave of systemic xenophobia and ethnic conflict in modern Finnish history.

Faced with this sudden shock of a dual heterogeneous population, the Finnish government's response strategy underwent a difficult evolution from initial "disaster relief" to "the construction of a legal framework." In the early 1990s, due to the lack of specialized immigration management departments, early resettlement measures were largely temporary and chaotic. Public power relied mainly on police administrative orders to implement physical spatial segregation and the distribution of basic supplies. As the crisis became more normalized and discussions about the fundamental rights of immigrants deepened, the Finnish legislature realized that simple security measures could not resolve long-term social divisions. In 1991, Finland fundamentally revised the Foreigners Act, and in 1999, it officially promulgated its first Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers. These legislative measures marked Finland's beginning to attempt to bring transnational population flows into a legal and institutionalized governance framework, gradually establishing immigrants' basic rights to education, healthcare, and social assistance at the legal level, laying the administrative foundation and legal framework for a future systematic "two-way integration."

1.2 The 21st Century to the 2010s: Welfare Contract Restructuring, Knowledge Economy Expansion, and Pragmatic Governance of "Structural Integration"

Entering the 21st century, Finland's immigration policy entered a strategic pivotal period, shifting from "passive response" to "proactive macroeconomic control." This paradigm shift was deeply rooted in Finland's structural self-adjustment of its core national contract as a typical Nordic welfare state facing global knowledge economy competition and an internal generational demographic crisis. During this historical cycle, the strategic understanding of immigration by policymakers underwent a fundamental shift: immigrants were no longer merely a "humanitarian burden" accepted based on moral responsibility, but were formally elevated to a "strategic human capital element" for hedging against aging risks, maintaining the sustainability of the welfare system, and enhancing the country's long-term competitiveness.

From the perspective of historical materialism and macroeconomic history, the underlying driving force behind policy innovation during this period stemmed from a dual structural fault:

The reality of a "demographic winter": In the first decade of the 21st century, Finland's post-war "baby boomer" generation began to reach retirement age, leading to a sharp deterioration in the dependency ratio. As one of the countries with the fastest aging population in Europe, the continued shrinking of its domestic workforce directly threatens the fiscal foundation of its high-tax, high-welfare system.

The industrial thirst of the “Nokia miracle”: At that time, the ICT industry cluster and high-tech ecosystem centered on Nokia was at the golden peak of its global expansion. The industry’s demand for high-end R&D talent, tech geeks, and a supporting international workforce far exceeded the limits of the relatively limited domestic education supply.

Under this dual pressure, the Finnish government comprehensively deepened and implemented the landmark Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (hereinafter referred to as the “2011 Act”) in 2011. This marked the formal replacement of fragmented administrative intervention with a universal, systematic, and rule-of-law-based national governance framework.

The core institutional contribution of the 2011 Act lies in establishing a highly professional “Individual Integration Plan” and “Initial Assessment” mechanism. This legislation broke with the previous selective aid restrictions targeting only refugees and the unemployed, bringing all foreigners legally residing in Finland (regardless of their motivation for entry—work, study, or family reunification) into the country’s integrated service network. With deep public financial backing, municipalities and the National Employment and Labor Department (TE-offices) collaborated closely to tailor empowerment contracts for each new immigrant, encompassing long-term language skills training (Finnish or Swedish), the transmission of social values, and targeted vocational skills retraining. This distinctly Nordic “Activation Policy” emphasizes the contractual principle of “equal rights and obligations”: immigrants are entitled to generous integrated subsidies and housing and healthcare support, but only if they strictly fulfill their contractual training and job-seeking obligations; any negligence will result in a direct reduction in social assistance.

Ideologically, the official discourse of this period completely abandoned the earlier chauvinistic narrative of one-way forced “assimilation,” shifting entirely to a “structural integration” paradigm that emphasizes two-way interaction. Structural integration refers to a state’s institutional efforts to eliminate workplace barriers and ensure absolute equality for immigrants in structural social resources such as education, healthcare, and housing, while simultaneously acknowledging and funding immigrants’ preservation of their native cultural identity and mother tongue rights. This policy design attempts to maintain high social cohesion while legally incorporating multiculturalism. However, as historical research reveals, this theoretically perfect pragmatic governance paradigm has encountered severe structural pain in practice: deeply ingrained cultural homogenization within the workplace, corporate rejection of non-native work experience, and the widespread “experience devaluation” trap faced by expatriates have resulted in many highly educated immigrants remaining in entry-level jobs or endless language training. This immense tension between “extreme openness at the institutional level” and “implicit exclusion in social psychology and the micro-workplace” not only failed to fully activate the labor market but also laid a deep foundation for the populist reversal of immigration policy in the 2020s.

1.3 2020s to Present: Political Polarization, Reshaping of Sovereign Borders, and a Comprehensive “Securitization” Contraction in Immigration Policy Entering the 2020s.

Finland’s immigration policy encountered its most dramatic and subversive “right-wing” ideological tsunami since its independence in 1917. Multiculturalism, humanitarian tolerance, and an open talent strategy, once hailed as institutional models in the early 21st century, were rapidly marginalized, replaced by an era of comprehensive contraction and defense characterized by “absolute exclusivity, rigorous screening, and national security above all else.” This abrupt halt to institutional change was not only an extreme response to the aftermath of the 2015 European refugee crisis and the most severe post-Cold War geopolitical turmoil in the Baltic Sea (such as the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict and Finland’s closure of its eastern border in 2023), but also an inevitable historical consequence of the complete polarization of the domestic party political landscape and the comprehensive capture of national legislative power by right-wing populism.

From the perspective of political history and electoral politics, the 2023 Finnish general election constituted a decisive institutional turning point in policy paradigm shifts. The Finns Party, a far-right populist party with a long-standing political platform of anti-immigration, anti-globalization, and advocacy for ethnic homogeneity, achieved a historic expansion in votes. As the second-largest party in parliament, it forcefully entered the right-wing coalition cabinet led by the Coalition Party and effectively controlled key powers related to immigration management, such as the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. This fundamental shift in power structure directly led the new Finnish government to explicitly state in its policy platform the political goal of “creating the strictest immigration system in Europe.” Against this backdrop, the governance logic of immigration issues underwent a complete transformation from “how to effectively integrate foreign labor” to the essential “securitization” of “how to build high walls through law to prevent external risks and exclude non-contributing groups.”

The series of amendments to the Aliens Act, signed by President Alexander Stubb and scheduled for full implementation in phases around 2026, constitutes a hard legal constraint in this era of austerity, with its revised provisions imposing unprecedented structural restrictions on the legal living space of immigrants:

This series of legislative reforms, characterized by strong “punitive” and “utilitarian” elements, marks Finland’s formal departure from the traditional Nordic governance myth that touted inclusivity, and its entry into a new, iron-fisted phase dominated by a mix of “welfare chauvinism” and security defense. From a historical perspective, this policy contraction represents a systemic self-imposed isolation exhibited by high-welfare states in the face of external uncertainties and internal anxieties about resource allocation. Through precise manipulation of legal techniques, the government has created a rigid “labor stratification” and “rights separation” within transnational population flows, significantly solidifying the negative social narrative that “outsiders are a social burden and a potential security threat.” This has not only further exacerbated the disadvantaged position of foreign workers in the labor

market but has also fundamentally eroded Finland's long-held values of social trust and democracy.

2. The Multidimensional Core Causal Mechanism Driving the Evolution of Finland's Immigration Policy

The dramatic upheavals and paradigm shifts in Finland's immigration policy over the past century are not merely random changes in public administration techniques, but rather a profound reflection of the inevitable product of the collective eruption of multiple deep-seated structural contradictions in a late-developing immigrant nation within a specific historical context. Based on the structural analysis framework of historical institutionalism, we can deconstruct the core causal mechanism driving its policy evolution into the following four mutually causal and deeply intertwined dimensions:

2.1 The "Push-Pull Effect" of Geopolitical Defensive Psychology and Macroeconomic Fluctuations

As a nation-state long situated on the edge of the fault line between the Western capitalist camp and the Eastern socialist camp, and in the geopolitical game between major powers, Finland's border consciousness and its policies on controlling foreign populations have long been characterized by a strong "geopolitical defensive" character. The deep-seated fear of Soviet geopolitical expansion during the Cold War fostered a self-protective mentality in Finland that favored internal cohesion over diversity, equating any uncertain external population movement with potential border infiltration and national security red lines. The post-Cold War policy of allowing the Ingria to return to Finland was essentially a geopolitical discourse construction by Finland during a period of international restructuring, using historical and kinship narratives to re-establish its "Nordic/Western" identity.

However, in the 2020s, with the escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine and Finland's formal entry into the NATO alliance, the frequent "hybrid attacks" by asylum seekers along the eastern border instantly pushed Finland's traditional security anxieties to their peak. Under this "wartime logic" of a new Cold War or post-Cold War crisis, the issue of immigration and refugee reception was instantly stripped of social welfare and humanitarian discussions by the Ministry of the Interior and Defense, and placed entirely at the center of the "national defense" radar. The border was no longer seen as a bearer of human rights under international law, but was reinterpreted as the front line of the struggle for sovereignty and security. This directly provided an unchallenged "geopolitical legitimacy" for the current polarized legislation that comprehensively tightens or even suspends certain asylum procedures. Complementing the external force of geopolitics is the endogenous "pull and push effect" of the macroeconomic cycle. Historical evidence shows that the leniency or strictness of Finland's immigration policy has always precisely fluctuated in sync with the barometers of the capital market and fiscal deficit. In the early 21st century, the high returns on capital brought about by the booming technology industry and the extreme shortage of labor constituted a strong "pull" for policy towards diversification and structural integration; during this period, transnational labor was given instrumental legitimacy by public power to maintain growth. However, this openness based on purely technocratic and utilitarian perspectives is inherently fragile. Once the macroeconomy enters a global recession,

high inflation suppresses domestic livelihoods, or fiscal deficits caused by aging approach the EU's warning line, the immigrant population will instantly fall from being praised by capital as "fuel for productivity" to being condemned by local voters as "welfare predators" and "scapegoats" during economic downturns. The current government has skillfully manipulated public panic during periods of economic stagnation, embellishing austerity policies as rational fiscal measures to "reduce public spending and optimize the fiscal structure," thus facilitating exclusive screening at the legislative level.

2.2 The Intrinsic Paradox of "Welfare Chauvinism" under the Welfare State Model

Finland, a globally renowned Scandinavian universalist welfare state, relies not only on generous public fiscal transfers but also on a deep-seated, highly homogenized mutual trust among its citizens in terms of cultural paradigms, work ethics, and class identity. The ingenious premise of this system's initial design is that all members share similar socialization paths, seamlessly transitioning into high-tax contributors upon adulthood and receiving reasonable public resource support in case of unemployment or illness. This closed-loop contract of "high taxes - high returns" inherently possesses a strong "internal homogenization dependency." However, when large numbers of non-EU third-country immigrants, lacking specific professional skills and facing severe Finnish language barriers, crossed borders to enter the system through humanitarian or family reunification channels in the 1990s and 21st century, the institutional paradox of the welfare state suddenly erupted. Faced with the barrier of Finnish—globally recognized as one of the most difficult non-Indo-European languages to learn—and a highly specialized and exclusive local labor market, many third-country immigrants were forced to remain within the government's integrated personal assistance, housing subsidies, and basic unemployment relief network for over a decade. This phenomenon was not due to the immigrants' subjective apathy, but rather because the welfare state's excessively high minimum wage and meticulous integrated administrative procedures objectively prolonged the time it took for non-local workers to reach "market access standards."

This high institutional integration cost quickly transformed initial humanitarian empathy into profound "resource dilution anxiety" in the minds of local taxpayers (especially the middle class facing high tax burdens and lower-income workers facing job competition). Fueled by populist political forces, a strong social psychology of "welfare chauvinism" has rapidly gained dominance in discourse. The core tenet of this ideology is extremely crude and inflammatory: Finland's high-quality but limited healthcare, education, and elderly care resources are "closed assets" built by generations of taxpayers through substantial contributions, and should possess absolute exclusive ethnic attributes; any non-skilled foreign group that cannot immediately generate high tax revenue, or even requires long-term public financial subsidies, is considered a "parasite and plunderer" of this contractual system. This widespread social resentment and exclusion ultimately forces policymakers to forcibly decouple and stratify the right to welfare from continuous, long-term labor market contributions (such as setting high income thresholds and rigidly linking PR applications to continuous days of employment), effectively transforming the universal social safety net into an institutionalized net for expelling,

exploiting, and stigmatizing foreign labor.

2.3 Structural Barriers in the Labor Market and the Historical Inertia of “Seniority Devaluation”

The success or failure of any sophisticated immigration integration legislation ultimately depends on its ability to achieve “structural absorption” of foreign populations in the labor market at the micro level. However, Finland’s labor market itself suffers from a strong “insider-outsider” binary system and historical inertia. This structural flaw directly led to the widespread failure of the “structural integration” policy touted in the early 21st century in practice.

Finnish workplace ecology is characterized by a high degree of “internal network dependence” and “cultural homogeneity screening.” Due to the extremely strong power of labor unions (such as the Finnish Central Trade Union Organization SAK), labor law provides domestic employees with what is arguably the most airtight dismissal protection and industry-wide collective wage negotiation mechanism in Europe. While this system perfectly protects the domestic workforce, it also significantly increases the implicit risk costs for companies hiring new employees. Under this high-risk threshold, Finnish employers exhibit extreme conservatism in recruitment, relying heavily on informal local referral networks and imposing almost irrationally stringent requirements on employees’ “Finnish language proficiency” and absolute understanding of “Finnish workplace unspoken rules.”

This leads to a vicious cycle of “institutional discrimination” and “de-qualification,” prevalent in historical and sociological assessments. Many international immigrants who have earned master’s or doctoral degrees from prestigious universities in their countries of origin, or even from top British and American universities, find their academic achievements and professional qualifications instantly rendered worthless by employers’ implicit biases upon entering Finland. Even if they have undergone years of government-funded administrative language training, their applications are often filtered out by the system or HR departments during the online application stage if their names clearly indicate an ethnic background or they cannot provide continuous “local work experience guarantees.” This structural exclusion at the micro level has forced a large number of highly skilled international talents into long-term structural unemployment, or forced them into extremely marginalized, low-end labor markets with little class mobility, such as cleaning, food delivery, and warehousing. This “dual-track tear” between policy and market, where the government invests heavily in immigration training at the macro level while businesses erect high walls to refuse acceptance at the micro level, not only completely severs the upward mobility channels for immigrants to achieve dignified integration through labor, but also objectively contributes to the historically high unemployment rate among non-EU immigrants. This negative data created by market barriers has subsequently been misused by right-wing politicians as irrefutable historical evidence to attack the “complete failure” of national immigration integration policies and the lack of ambition among immigrant groups, forming a highly closed, vicious causal cycle.

2.4 Political Polarization and Populism’s Reconstruction of Legislative Narratives

In the analytical context of historical institutionalism, every fundamental reconstruction of law and

policy is the result of discursive power and legislative capture. The overall rightward shift and political polarization of the Finnish political spectrum in the second decade of the 21st century were the direct institutional drivers behind the complete end of multiculturalism and the emergence of the current repressive and austerity policies.

The Orthodox Finns Party, with its anti-immigration, opposition to European integration, and promotion of welfare chauvinism, skillfully and for over a decade deeply intertwined the anxieties of the local lower classes due to globalization's industrial outflows, the security fears stemming from geopolitical instability, and the voters' underlying xenophobic sentiments regarding multicultural conflict. They successfully seized the agenda-setting power in public discourse, reconstructing the national legislative narrative of transnational population flows: simplifying and stigmatizing complex macro-level issues—originally falling under the categories of demography, economics, and international humanitarian law—into a zero-sum game and a struggle for survival resources between “pure local taxpayers” and “foreign welfare predators/potential terrorists.”

The most profound and poisonous effect of this populist narrative on the Finnish political landscape lies in its complete disruption of the post-war Finnish tradition of “consensus politics,” dominated by centrist parties (such as the Centre Party and the Social Democratic Party) and emphasizing moderate compromise. Faced with the Orthodox Finns Party's massive vote pool gained through manipulating immigration issues, traditional center-right parties (such as the National Coalition Party) were forced to fully align themselves with its ideology in order to maintain a majority in the elections, even directly incorporating far-right xenophobic views as bargaining chips in their cabinet policy platforms.

Thus, the numerous amendments to the Foreigners Act to be rolled out between 2024 and 2026 clearly reveal a tiered control system dominated by populism and imbued with a strong “racial utilitarian logic” prevalent in the European right wing. Public power no longer attempts to conceal its systematic exclusion of non-European, low-skilled asylum seekers. Instead, it blatantly establishes insurmountable barriers in legislation, such as language, income, and unemployment penalties, to forcibly categorize transnational migrants as either “high-end tools with short-term exploitative value” or “humanitarian burdens that need to be guarded against, excluded, and swiftly deported.” This hierarchical reconstruction of legislative ideology has completely transformed Finland's immigration management system from a modern governance mechanism that touted “promoting two-way integration and upholding basic human rights” into an administrative purge and surveillance machine that executes populist political will and maintains the illusion of ethnic homogeneity.

3. Conclusion:

The Institutional Margins of the Welfare State and the Historical Fate of Pluralism Looking back at the evolution of Finland's immigration policy over the past century—from the “assimilation inertia” at independence in 1917, to the “passive openness” of the post-Cold War era, to the “structural integration” of the early 21st century, and finally mired in a comprehensive “security-driven

contraction” in the 2020s—the trajectory of history seems to have completed a logically ironic closed loop amidst the clamor. Finland briefly attempted, through public administration and macro-planning, to utilize its excellent public credit, abundant fiscal leverage, and professed spirit of equality and the rule of law to tame the heterogeneous impact of globalized transnational population flows, trying to mold the previously marginalized “others” into highly productive citizens within the Nordic welfare model. However, this governance myth, constructed from a blend of pragmatic technocrats and multicultural idealism, was ultimately shattered by reality amidst the fiscal burden of an aging population, the cold iron curtain of geopolitics, and the turbulent waves of political polarization.

For macro-historians and regional governance scholars, the Finnish case not only provides a Nordic sample of transnational population flows, but also starkly and profoundly reveals the absolute historical limits of institutional resilience, fiscal margins, and socio-psychological tolerance in modern welfare states when faced with irreconcilable differences.

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