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## **"Welcome but..."**

**Life management and the attitudes  
towards immigrants in Finland**

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## **”Welcome but...”**

### **Life management and the attitudes towards immigrants in Finland**

#### **1. Introduction**

Finland has become more and more an immigrant receiving country in the 1990's. The immigration of the 1990s has had some characteristic features:

The increase of immigration has been very fast: the number of non-Finnish nationals residing permanently in Finland has increased threefold higher during 1990's (from 21 000 to 75 000, see: MoniTori Plus 1997, 19). The share of the foreign population is about 1.4 % - the figure is one of the lowest in Western Europe and among the EU countries.

The biggest immigrant groups are from the former Soviet Union, especially from Russia and Estonia (about 25 000). Ingrians as a group of Finnish heritage form the majority of these immigrants. They have been considered as return migrants since 1991 (compare with the German Aussiedler-policy from Russia).

The number of asylum seekers and refugees is about 14,000. The biggest groups are the Somalians (about 4,500), The Vietnamese (3,500) and the former Yugoslavians (also 3,500, see: MoniTori Plus, 19-22, MoniTori 1/97, Statistics ). The annual refugee quota is 500, which implies that the Finnish refugee policy has been rather restrictive.

The immigration has occurred mainly during the economic recession in 1990's. At the same time as the economy decline was taking place, immigration has substantially grown. The immigration has not been labor migration. This probably affects greatly the attitudes of Finnish people to immigration.

My paper will give with the following topics:

1. The attitudes towards immigrants and refugees in Finland in 1995 and comparison with corresponding studies made in 1987 and 1993.
2. The connection between attitudes towards immigration and the life management. Life management has been divided into two parts: the internal (e.g. self confidence, self esteem...) and the external (occupation, education, income level...).

**Methods:** The methods used in the paper are: Frequencies, cross-tabulation (including chi<sup>2</sup>-test) and MCA-analysis. The sum-variables were constructed when the external and internal dimension of life management was studied.

**Material:** The target population was all residents (18-75 years) in Finland in November 1995. The sample was 1 500 inhabitants. 770 questionnaires were returned, thus the response percentage was 52 %. The loss was controlled and it was not systematic, based on the loss analysis with nine variables (table 1).

Table 1: The respondents (n=770) and the whole Finnish population (18-75 years old), %

	Respondents	The whole population
Married, %	53.9	53.4
18-34 years old, %	32.1	32.2
Living in urban areas, %	65.9	64.6
Graduated in high school, %	29.4	27.0
Unemployment rare, %	17.9	17.2
Voted socialist parties, %	39.5	39.6
Swedish speaking, %	3.4	5.8
Lives in South Finland, %	57.0	53.7
Women, %	53.8	50.5

## 2. The attitudes towards immigration - a short description

The Finns have traditionally had a more favorable attitudes towards the immigration of refugees than towards labor migration (see: Jaakkola 1995). When considering both types of migration the attitudes have become hardened in 1995.

Table 2. The attitudes of Finns towards refugees and foreign job-seekers, percentage (the share of respondents who accept the immigration).

	Jaakkola 1987	Jaakkola 1993	Söderling 1995
Proportion of positive answers to the question: 'Should Finland receive more refugees?'	41	20	13
Proportion of positive answers to the question: 'Should Finland receive more foreign job-seekers?'	21	14	9

The most negative attitudes were found among men, the elderly and those with low education. Due to the economic recession, the most negative attitudes were found among the people who voted social democratic candidates in the last parliamentary election. Traditionally the supporters of the Center (farmers) party have had a reluctant attitude towards aliens (See: Jaakkola 1995).

When attitudes were examined according to immigrant groups, foreign adopted children and students were the most desirable newcomers in 1993 (Jaakkola 1995, 22). In 1995 the attitudes were similar because the best accepted individual immigrant group was foreign war orphans (this group was not included in Jaakkola's study); 56% of the respondents had the opinion that Finland should accept more persons belonging this group.

On the basis of this finding it can be hypothesized that the more concretely or more easily the immigrant group can be defined, the more easily it can be accepted. On the other hand, the study clearly showed that the Finns do not see the immigrants as a resource; consequently only one tenth of the respondents wished for more foreign engineers.

In general the Finns most often saw immigration as a threat. Negative statements were clearly accepted more often when they were connected with the threatening aspect of migration (drugs are spreading/criminality will increase...) . Thus the positive claims (for example the language skills of the Finns will improve/joy of life will increase) got clearly less support.

The most positive attitudes are towards Norwegians (71 % accepted them as immigrants), the Ingrians (70 %) and the Swedes (67 %). These immigrant groups are not connected with refugeeism. The ethnic groups which are connected with asylum seeking or refugeeism are the most unpopular.

According to conflict theory (see Rex 1983, 121), the more original people are afraid of losing their jobs, the more restrictive are their attitudes. This explanation does not apply in Finland, because the most accepted groups have the lowest unemployment rates and vice versa (for example: unemployment rate among Germans was in January 1997 14 %, Swedes 17 %, Norwegians 20 %, Somalians 86 %, Iranians 83 % and Iraqians 93 %, see : MoniTori Plus 1997, 22).

### **3. Life management and attitudes towards immigrants**

#### **3.1. Life management: a short description of the concept**

In social sciences the concept 'life management' is often divided into two parts, internal and external. The most common and frequently used division is probably the one introduced by Roos (1987). According to this scholar in the simplest form of external life management, the individual protects him/herself against unexpected factors which otherwise would disturb his/her life balance. Consequently, the concept 'external life management' is strongly affected by such factors as generation, sex, education and occupation. Materially and mentally secured circumstances, material welfare and a good economic situation are essential factors determining the external side of life management (Roos 1987, 65-66).

Internal life management on the other hand means according to Roos that 'an individual has the ability to adapt and think positively whatever happens to him/her in life, which in fact can include also very dramatic events'. (Roos 1987, 65-66).

Riihinen (1996) notes that the grouping into external and internal determinants causes some problems. One of them is related to the goals in life which can be material, intellectual, ethical, religious etc. The capability to achieve material goals falls probably best under the concept of external life management. Intellectual, ethical and religious goals are mainly related to the internal part of the concept (Riihinen 1996, 29).

### 3.2 Indicators for external life management

1. Main type of occupational activity: Respondents were divided in three groups: (Three-category variable)
2. Level of basic education. (Three-category variable)
3. Level of vocational and occupational education (Five-category variable)
4. The respondents' opinion of their material living standard (consumption potential, level of housing etc.). (Five-category variable)
5. The respondents' opinion of their income rate and economic situation. (Five-category variable)

The sum -variable for external life management

From the above mentioned group of variables measuring external life management, a sum-variable was then created by summing up the values of each variable. The theoretical limits of the sum-variable fell within 5 and 23 points.

Two groups were created: those who had obtained 5-14 points were labeled as a group of 'worse external life management' and the rest 'better external life management'.

*Table 3. External life management, sum-variable, %*

<b>Points for external life management</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Worse /5-14 points	54
2. Better/15-21 points	45
Total, %	100
Total, N	674

### 3.3. Indicators for internal life management

In this study, internal life management was measured by using three variables:

1. The proposition 'I am afraid that people will be disappointed in me if they find out what I am really like' measures the inner strength and self-confidence of an individual. (Three-category variable)
2. The second variable was assumed to take account of the respondent's faith in the future: 'What do you think about your future in general'(Five-category variable).
3. Proposition: 'What do you think about your life as a whole?'. (Five-category variable).

The sum -variable for the internal life management

The theoretical limits of the sum-variable used to measure internal life management fell within 3 and 13 points.

*Table 4. The distribution of respondents according to the points of internal life management, %*

Points for internal life management	%
1. Worse /3-10 points	47
2. Better /11-13 points	53
Total, %	100
Total, N	704

### 3.4. The typology of the life management

The life management entity is a combination of the sum-variables measuring internal and external dimension of life management.

By cross-tabulating the variables measuring external and internal life management, a four-section figure was constructed (i.e. four different groups of life management). The groups were relatively equal in size (see the figure 1 below). The groups were termed: **(1) winners, (2) survivors, (3) facade people and (4) losers.**

Winners had good control over both the internal and external sides of their life, whereas the 'losers' belonged in both cases to the worse half.

*Figure 1. The typology of life management, %*

		External life management	
		Worse	Better
Internal life management	Worse	<b>Losers (32 %)</b>	<b>Facade people (14 %)</b>
	Better	<b>Survivors (22 %)</b>	<b>Winners (32%)</b>

The major part of the collected data fell into the categories losers and winners (32 % of both).

For **winners** it is typical that they are more often in consensual unions, live in the metropolitan area, are highly educated, have a high income and have voted for parties belonging to the political right. They relatively often are also women. Nevertheless, gender cannot be used as an explaining factor here.

**Facade people** live on the average more often in the cities than in rural area, they are typically well-educated, and have more than average voted for the left wing parties. Compared to the winners the voting behavior is actually the most significant difference found in the study of single variables.

The most significant difference of the **survivors** compared to the previous two groups is their lower level of basic and occupational education, their higher unemployment rate as well as their lower income rate.

For the group **losers** characteristic is that they are on the average oldest and loneliest, live outside the metropolitan area, have the lowest basic and occupational education, lowest incomes and are most passive in their voting behavior.

*In summary it can be noted that the external life management has a close connection to this typology: The groups having a strong external life management ('winners' and 'facade people') have much in common and correspondingly the groups with poor external life management ('survivors and 'losers) share many typical characteristics.*

#### 4. The types of life management and the attitudes towards refugeeism

A clear connection was seen between the attitudes to immigrants and the life management: The 'winners' were most positive, whereas the 'losers' most negative (the table below):

*Table 5. The attitude to refugeeism according to the type of life management. Proportion: 'Finland should take more refugees', %*

Attitude to refugeeism	Typology				Total
	Winners	Facade people	Survivors	Losers	
More than now	19	23	9	8	14
As now/cannot say	48	49	50	42	47
Less than now	33	28	41	50	39
Total, %	100	100	100	100	100
Total, N	209	92	143	205	649

Chi<sup>2</sup>-test: 29,12, DF = 6, p = 0,0000

The result of the Chi<sup>2</sup>-test shows that the connection between the sense of coherence and the attitude to refugeeism is very significant. On the basis of the table two conclusions can be drawn: First, the most positive attitude to refugees have the 'winners' and 'facade people', in other words persons by whom at least the external side of life management is in good shape. Second, the most refugee negative persons are the 'losers', namely a half of them would like to reduce refugee admission from the present level.

The MCA-analysis was used to study the connection between life management and the attitude towards refugeeism. Two variables were used as a dependent variables:

1. The sum-variable of internal life management (categories: 1. worse internal life management, 2. better internal life management)
2. The sum-variable of external life management (see categories above).

The independent variable was the three category question: 'Should Finland receive more refugees?'

The result of the MCA-analysis is clear: external life management has a clear connection with the attitudes towards refugeeism: the persons belonging to the worse external life management groups had the most restrictive attitudes towards refugees. Better life management had an opposite effect on attitudes.

*Table 6. MCA-analysis: Connection between attitude towards immigration and dimensions of life management.*

<b>Dependent variables and the categories</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Grand mean 2.26 (mean of all respondents) <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Beta- coefficient</b>
Internal life managem.			
- worse	297	2.27	.01 p = .220
- better	352	2.25	
External life managem.			
- worse	348	2.38	.19 p = .000
- better	301	2.12	

Multiple R Squared = 0.038, Multiple R = 0.195

The smaller the average score, the more positive the attitudes towards refugees (the categories of the independent variable: see table 5 on the previous page)

## 5. Life management and racism

The concept of racism is an ambiguous concept (see for example Banton 1988, 39-40). Racism can be defined as an individual's value as a human being which then would be dependent on his or her membership in an ethnic, nationality, or language group (see Koivukangas 1996, 8). In a wider sense this would mean that an individual's human value depends on his or her intelligence. As a consequence the proposition 'there are race-specific differences in intelligence between people' can be used to study the respondents reactions to a racist statement in general.

Slightly less than ten percent of the respondents fully agreed with this statement and approximately another ten percent partly agreed. However, this matter can be approached also from a wider perspective. Using so-called 'sophisticated opinion' as a reference point, the reaction to this kind of a statement should be negative. So even the alternative 'cannot say' should at this point be interpreted as racism. As a consequence as much as 49 % of the respondents did not in fact reject this statement (Table 6 below).

*Table 7. The attitudes to a racist proposition 'There are race-specific differences in intelligence between people' in relation to the typology of life management. Five-category variable, %*

Attitude to a racist proposition	Typology				Total
	Winners	Facade people	Survivors	Losers	
Fully agree	6	3	6	13	8
Partially agree	10	7	12	10	10
I cannot say	24	27	27	36	29
Partially disagree	20	17	16	18	18
Fully disagree	39	46	39	23	35
Total, %	100	100	100	100	100
Total, N	208	93	143	207	651

$\chi^2 = 32.023$ ,  $DF = 12$ ,  $p = .0014$

It has already been noted that the four types of life management can be divided in two groups according to their attitude to refugees: The 'successful' and the 'facade people' resemble each other very much concerning their attitudes, as do also, on the other hand, the more restrictive groups 'survivors' and 'losers'.

With respect to the racist proposition, the 'survivors' are here clearly closer to the 'winners' and the 'facade people'. In other words the 'losers' seem to be the only group, in which the majority does not reject this racist proposition. Losers were described as persons who had worse life management in both internal and external areas.

## 6. Summary and conclusions

Attitudes towards immigration have become more restrictive in Finland between the years 1993 and 1995. This applies to the refugee as well as labor force immigration.

The results of the study indicated that the immigration is still more a burden than a resource for the Finns. So for example the immigration of foreign engineers has not been considered as especially advantageous to Finland. Behind this severity can, however, also be seen some signs of moderation as we really begin to face the challenges of the refugee problem: The majority of the Finns are still willing to receive children from the war-stricken countries.

The MCA-analysis showed clearly, that the external dimension of the life management is crucial when the attitudes towards immigration are studied.

Life management and the attitudes towards immigration were observed to have a significant connection. The lack of external life management (low income, low level of education...) was strongly related to negative attitudes towards foreigners. Four life management types were found: winners, facade-people, survivors and losers. The most negative attitudes towards refugees and job-seekers were held by the survivors and the losers, both belonging to the worse external life management group. When the racist attitudes were studied, the losers were the only extremely racist group.

The following main conclusion can be drawn from the relation between life management and the attitudes towards immigrants: If the reduction of the Finnish welfare system still continues, the attitudes to immigration might even become more restrictive. This argument is based on the idea that the primary aim of the Finnish welfare model (called also Nordic welfare model) has traditionally been to guarantee equal resources to every citizen's outer life settings.

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