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## About the Journal

The Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration (FJEM) is devoted to the high quality study of ethnic relations and international migration. Published biannually by the Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration (ETMU), this peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, open-access journal provides a forum for discussion and the refinement of key ideas and concepts in the fields of ethnicity and international population movement. The Editors welcome articles, research reports and book review essays from researchers, professionals, and students all over the world. Although international in its scope of interests and range of contributors, The Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration focuses particularly on research conducted in Finland and other Nordic countries. Opinions expressed in the FJEM articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ETMU.

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Tuomas Martikainen

## Nordic Migrations – Past and Present

The 4<sup>th</sup> Etmu Days in Turku/Åbo, 26–27 October, 2007

The fourth annual conference of the Society for Ethnic and Migration Studies, Etmu, was dedicated to Nordic migrations. As Finnish researchers of ethnicity and migration have much to learn from the experiences of neighbouring countries, we aimed to present a many-sided picture of the field in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. For that purpose, we invited seven keynote speakers from these countries. They represented such diverse academic disciplines as anthropology, gender studies, geography, history, international law, religious studies and sociology. The conference was well-attended, as approximately 180 participants from a number of countries came to the Swedish-language Åbo Akademi University on 26–27 October, 2007. Over fifty papers were presented in twelve sessions. Session themes varied from immigrants in rural areas to migration history and from citizenship to postcolonial feminism. The conference was the largest and most diverse of all the Etmu Days until then. Nevertheless, we are looking for further growth in the attendance and thematic as well as disciplinary diversity of the conference, as the societal relevance of the topics under study are only increasing.

In this issue of the Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration, we are honoured to publish the keynote lectures of Professor Diana Mulinari (Center for Gender Research, University of Lund, Sweden) and Dr Garbi Schmidt (The Danish National Centre for Social Research). Diana Mulinari's article is based on interviews with Latin American immigrant women in Sweden. Mulinari studies narratives of exile discourses, cultural belonging and families within a racialised welfare state. She emphasises women's agency and ability to analyse their own situations as well as to oppose stereotypes. Garbi Schmidt discusses transnational marriages among youth of Pakistani and Turkish origin in Denmark. She reveals the creativity and multiplicity of ways in which young people negotiate the rules established by their elders. Analysing her material in terms of a Foucaultian theory of

power, she shows how immigrants' and their children's transnational marriages intertwine in conflicting power regimes between parents and children as well as between migrants and the Danish state.

Let us also return to the core messages of the other keynote lectures of the Etmu Days. Professor Charles Westin (CEIFO, Sweden) discussed the demographic trajectories of possible source areas for future migrant flows. Population growth in Africa and Asia is making these continents increasingly important departure areas for international migration, whereas several previously important source countries will become of lesser importance. Even if Westin's thesis is ultimately speculative, he nevertheless pointed out to the pressing need of using demographic data and projections in imagining possible futures. Professor Max Engman (Åbo Akademi University, Finland) introduced to the audience experiences of the Finnish population in historical St. Petersburg, Russia. Engman vividly described the minority's poor linguistic skills and highlighted their ethnic division of labour. There were vast differences in experiences, obviously related to social class and educational background which are still common themes today. Dr Ali Najib (Uppsala University, Sweden) discussed transnational entrepreneurship and argued that it is compatible with integration to Swedish society. Transnational businessmen have generally larger companies, make more revenues and are better integrated than those without business connections outside Sweden. Professor Thomas Hylland Eriksen's (University of Oslo, Norway) address was titled "Cultural Complexities, Old and New." Hylland Eriksen mesmerised the audience with an exploration of the complexities of cultural globalization, based on his new book *Globalization* (Berg, 2007). The conference came to its end with Professor Martin Scheinin's (Åbo Akademi University, Finland) lecture on the Nordic countries and Fortress Europe. While acknowledging the Nordic contribution to human rights and refugee issues, Scheinin still

took a critical stance and demanded that the Nordic countries take a more proactive role in creating better practices and living up to higher standards in these issues. People are unnecessarily killed and humiliated in their attempts to enter Europe.

With the publication of these articles we want to start a tradition of providing the core contributions of Etmu Days to those who are not able to participate as well as to those who want to revisit these academic papers of high quality. The study of ethnicity and migration in Finland as well as elsewhere in Europe seems to be at a crossroads with expectations of a new wave of large-scale migration to Europe due to aging populations and expected labour force shortages. In this context it is useful to learn about historical experiences and to look for new solutions and understandings for the increasingly complex world in motion.

The conference required much energy from local organizers and I would like to take this opportunity to once again

thank all the people participating in the process. The organizing team consisted of Dr. Tuomas Martikainen, Dr. Östen Wahlbeck, Prof. Anna-Maria Åström, Doc. Elli Heikkilä, and Mr. Jouni Korkiasaari, representing various departments of Åbo Akademi University and the Institute of Migration. The tireless efforts of Ms. Gabi Limbach as the conference secretary were highly appreciated, not to forget the fine contributions of many student volunteers. The conference and this publication were funded by the Academy of Finland, the City of Turku, the Institute of Migration, Kulturfonden för Finland och Sverige, Nordic Culture Fund, Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Stiftelsen för Åbo Akademi and Turku Region Development Centre.

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# ETMU Days 2009

**Joensuu 22–23 October 2009**

The 6th ETMU Days will be held in Joensuu, Eastern Finland, under the title “Finland and Innovative Cultural Diversity”. The main speakers are Doreen Massey (The Open University, UK) and Tariq Modood (University of Bristol, UK). The purpose of the event is to create an opportunity for researchers and representatives of different sectors for open dialogue with each other and to discuss Finland of tomorrow. The ETMU Days in Joensuu will form a multiform ensemble including scientific presentations, workshops and roundtable discussions on current topics. The theme of the evening banquet is “FinlandRemix” which offers something traditional and something new wrapped in a package never seen or experienced before!

Please, make already a reservation for the 2009 ETMU Days in your calendar.

*Welcome to Joensuu in October 2009!*

Diana Mulinari

## Gendered Spaces: Women of Latin American Origin in Sweden

### Abstract

The aim of this article is to grasp continuity and change in gender relations within the Latin American community in Sweden. The efforts of Swedish antiracist feminists to analyse the welfare state as racialised and to illuminate the gendered forms of racism is at the core of my analysis. Central to my reflection is an understanding of women's lives in the cross-roads between their communities and the gender equality rhetoric of the Swedish welfare state. I will focus on several themes evolving from women's narratives: exile discourses, cultural belonging and transnational families.

### Introduction

The Swedish public landscape has changed in the last twenty years. Issues related to "race"/ethnicity are today central not only in debates about migration and citizenship but also in the ways identities and notions of belonging are named in the country. Gender and sexuality, feminist researchers argue, play a central role in the creation of these boundaries.

The aim of this article is to look into continuity and change in gender relations within the Latin American community in Sweden. Central to my reflection is an understanding of women's lives at the cross-roads between their own communities and the Swedish welfare state. While there are several studies that address the special experience of Latin Americans as political refugees (Lindquist 1991) there is a lack of research that explores these experiences as highly gendered. The numerous feminist studies focusing on the specificities of the Swedish welfare state do not theoretically or empirically engage with the racialisation of the state.

The article starts with a brief exploration of my theoretical and methodological points of departure. Thereafter I will shortly highlight some specificities of the Swedish ethnic regime and illuminate its institutional particularities. The central part of the article explores relevant themes evolving from women's narratives that illustrate the construction of gendered and racialised femininities through and within different social fields: the Swedish unions, the diasporic community in Sweden and transnational households.

### Theoretical points of departure

Feminist contributions to the field of ethnic and racial studies have been immensely productive. Researches within the field have illuminated the centrality of gender in migration processes, explored the specific position of (migrant) women within racialised labour markets and analyzed the relationship between sexuality and colonialism and between gender metaphors and boundaries of nationhood (Anthias and Yuval Davies 1992). A range of feminist interventions depart from the concept of intersectionality (Collins 1998, de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005) that localises social relations of domination/subordination, exploitation and oppression within a multitude of systems or regimes that interact with, reinforce or weaken, and (re)produce each other. Intersectionality as an analytical category and as a sensitizing concept aims to give a concrete form to the understanding of gender as a sexualised, racialised and class-based social relation. The term embodies a feminist quest for a model of analysis of the production of gender hierarchies, woven into other forms of inequalities.

To conceptualise women in my research "minority women" or women from "minority" population would locate them into a hierarchical and fixed relation within national-state borders that re-creates the (colonial) fantasy of a stable majority based on (assumed) shared ethnic backgrounds. The notion of minority fails to take into account the diversification of relations of power and connotes the idea of a minor,

reproducing the (colonial) desire to infantilise groups on the basis of “race”/ethnicity. Identities constructed around the notion of political refugee and exile are present in women’s narratives. However, these identities are shaped by the experience of being racialised in the context of an increasingly exclusive Fortress Europe (Schierup et al 2006). The concept of racialised subjectivity explores the particular forms of gender identity formation that evolve from (migrant) women’s location within (racist) cultural meanings that position them outside the realm of national belonging, locations that are regulated through discourses on “race”, culture and ethnicity. The efforts of antiracist feminists to understand the interaction between the state, ideologies of national belonging and the construction and regulation of specific types of women as racialised gendered subjects (Lewis 2000) are at the core of my analysis.

There are, according to Stuart Hall (1990), two different ways of thinking about cultural identity. The first one defines cultural identity in terms of one shared culture; a sort of collective one true self created by a common historical experience and shared cultural codes. Constitutive of the discourse of exile is a longing for the South where values such as solidarity, passion, commitment, sensuality and positive chaos are underlined. I do agree with Hall that this concept of essential culture entails a central way for subordinated groups to challenge otherness. Struggling against oppressive construction of particular identities often takes the form of contesting negative images with positive ones, and the struggle over representation produces an image of one, separated cultural identity.

There is, however, a second view of cultural identity. This position recognises that along with many similarities, there are critical points of difference within an ethnic “community,” and points out ongoing struggles to define what we really are or, since history has intervened, what we have become (Grossberg 1997). When attempting to delineate a group’s common cultural practices, there is always a risk of neglecting historical dynamics that make invisible a diversity of narratives that construct the group. How are the power relations of gender negotiated within the “we”? Who may speak as a “we”? What does it mean to speak as a latino in Sweden?

### Methodological starting points

My informants often use the word *la comunidad* to refer to the Latin American diasporic space(s) in Sweden. My use of the concept of community has been influenced by both sociological and feminist debates (Cohen 1985). The concept grasps diversified forms of belonging as well as membership in varied social groups. All of my informants define themselves as latinos in Sweden. However, they can also underline their belonging to other communities such as specific nation-states, ethnicities, politics or religions.

I have used a patchwork method to tell the same story (stories) of Latin American women in Sweden through dif-

ferent interventions and voices. The material presented in this article evolves from twenty in-depth interviews which I believe cover up to a certain point the heterogeneity of the group in terms of class, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, family status and time of residence in Sweden. Many of the women I have interviewed are divorced. Most of them are mothers. Two of them name themselves as lesbians. Some of them have returned to their country of origin but are now living in Sweden. Most of them are employed. Fieldwork (6 months) has focused on cultural (tango and salsa), political, and family events. No statistical representativeness is claimed. However, I believe that my findings are analytically generalizable and can relate back to broader theory of gender, identity formation and racism.

While it is often argued that the Latin Americans in Sweden are political migrants, the Latin American community has undergone significant changes during the past thirty years. May be the most significant change is the increasing visibility of the voices of the so called second generation. But the community has also expanded to include other regions that have suffered from political instability and violations of human rights such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru and Cuba (in Cuba’s case, violations are often related to state policy towards homosexuality) as well as new groups that migrate as a response to the collapse of Latin American economies and the politics of structural adjustment. Racism constitutes one important level on which the ethnic identity of Latin American in Sweden today can be analysed. If ‘Latin American’ or ‘Latino’ is used to name belonging to the community, ‘black skull’ (in Swedish: *svart skalle*) connotes belonging to the “nation”, the panethnic Swedish collectivity. This latter concept reflects the identification the group has developed through the experience of racialisation with the structural position of “invandrare.”

There are wider differences among the women. Almost all my informants with working class backgrounds made comments such as this: *We have always worked, I found work the day after I arrived, I always paid taxes.* Differences appear in life careers between working class women who enter the labour market directly after their migration and middle class women who often continued their education in Sweden. Class background is relevant to the diversity of ways through which Latin American women create an identification as migrants emphasising the “we” and the blackness of the Third world, or a de-identification emphasising the “we” and the (whiteness) of their European “ancestors.” Class background is also central to the ways in which narratives of racism and discrimination are told. Whereas many of my working class informants found it insulting to be treated as welfare dependents and their children as drug dealers and criminals, for women with middle class backgrounds, otherness is to be treated as stupid, traditional and backward.

The tension of being a “native anthropologist” (Narayan 1993) confronted and challenged me throughout my fieldwork and writing. Was I doing fieldwork when participating in different cultural arrangements that had been part

of my life? While I did not interview my close friends or extended family, I had to confront my own silences during my research and a commonsense feeling which I share with all other Latinos, that of knowing my own community, became challenged. My research journey implied a process of un-learning.

Narayan suggests that the paradigm polarising regular and native anthropology is part of the disciplinary wisdom of (colonial) anthropology. Historically, anthropologists used to study others whose alien cultural worlds they, through several rites de passage, came to know. Those who wrote about their own culture were believed to do so from a position of infinite affinity. Several researchers have challenged this assumption by pointing to the fact that “white” Europeans are seldom defined as native anthropologists when they study their own societies and that because of class, gender and professional culture the extent to which somebody is an authentic insider is questionable.

Narayan’s analysis is relevant to my research. I agree with her: from an epistemological point of view outsiders/within are not privileged knowers. However, I will suggest that they/we are forced to know in different forms, both because of the ways science is racialised and gendered and functions through the institutional power of constructing specific groups as others and because identities are about identifications, belonging and commitment. Like most feminist researchers, I consider strategies that underline the authoritative neutral and objective voice of the disciplines as theoretically and methodologically narrowed. I have positioned myself as an antiracist feminist writing about my own community, and through the research process I try to reflect upon the specific tensions that evolve when writing about people that I call my own, knowing that for the first time in my life I will never, ever leave “the field.”

## Background

My point of departure is that processes of racialisation/ethnification are today central to social exclusion in Sweden. In an international, comparative perspective, Swedish society is characterised by a large number of foreign-born immigrants. Castles and Miller (1993) classify Sweden in their analysis of migration regimes together with Australia and Canada as national states with a migration system of permanent settlement, where immigrants are formally granted access to social rights. Historically, Swedish immigration policy has differed greatly from the guest worker systems developed in countries like West Germany and Switzerland. During the last decades, migration has been extensive and diversified. The Swedish strategy has been one of “inclusive subordination” (Mulinari and Neergaard 2004). Racialised groups have been granted citizenship, but forced to subordinated positions in the labour market and in the welfare state.

During the eighties and nineties, migrants’ position in the labour market changed from full employment (for women,

higher employment rates than their “Swedish” counterparts) to increasing rates of unemployment, especially accentuated after the depression of 1992. At the same time, conflict over the meaning of culture increased and discourses of national belonging became more racialised in the context of cutbacks in the social security systems and (more) restrictive refugee policies.

Research on migration and gender shows that migrant women have been pioneers of Swedish modernity through their location within the Swedish labour market. During the sixties and seventies, they were to a greater extent employed in traditional male areas, had a higher employment rate and a higher level of full-time employment. Despite the fact that women and migrants had entered the labour market in large numbers during the past three decades (over half a million of each group) their location in the labour market is quite different. While Swedish women found employment in the public sector, migrants (both women and men) were employed in manufacturing and service industries which in the 1960s and 1970s actively recruited workers from southern European countries and from Finland. Structural change with the financial crisis and industrial reorganizations lead to increasing unemployment rates which affected citizens with migrant background harder, partly because of their overrepresentation in more susceptible sectors, and partly because of ethnic discrimination in discharge procedures. The decreasing demand for labour illustrates the role of racism in recruiting workers. In the severe economic crisis following 1992, unemployment rates exploded and hit hard on the racialised labour force. Wuokko Knocke’s (1994) research explores the experiences of migrant women at one of Volvo’s larger car assembly plants. Her results indicate that new technological changes usually place them in the “unusable” category. Migrant women that had fuelled capitalist economies with cheap and low-skill labour for more than two decades confronted increasing unemployment.

Despite a history of high and varied employment rates, migrant women were now represented as embodying a culture that was a central factor in explaining their own unemployment or sick leave (de los Reyes 1998). Political measures to stimulate employment focused on raising immigrant women’s self esteem and creating jobs involving tasks such as sewing and cooking; labour supposedly suitable for a group seen as essentially traditional.

Swedish postcolonial feminists have argued that the construction of migrant women as a devalued other has been a necessary precondition for the creation of the modern Swedish woman, and is constitutive to narratives of national belonging. Alexandra Ålund (1998) has asserted that hegemonic Swedish feminist research has represented immigrant women as vulnerable, in need of protection, and as oppressed by husbands, large families and cultural heritage. Needless to say, these stereotypes operate for all immigrant women from the Third World regardless of class, generation, ethnic background or sexual identity.

## Women, nation and citizenship

Compared to the situation in the United Kingdom, there has rarely been any organised, explicit racism within the Swedish trade union movement. Three of the reasons that may explain the low level of articulated racism are: Sweden's short (and failed) colonial project, strong biological racism legitimated by science that became highly marginal following the defeat of the Nazis in 1945, and the organised subordination of migrants within the labour market that for many years limited the possibility of racialised workers to compete with "Swedish" workers. Up to the present and in contrast with emerging antiracist trends in England that have spread to the labour movement, Swedish trade unions still continue to view the subordination of racialised groups as a problem of "integration" and rarely as an effect of racism.

FAI is a network of trade union activists with migrant background aiming to confront ethnic discrimination within Swedish unions. The network wants to challenge (racist) representations that portray migrant workers as a threat to "Swedish" working class cohesion. The general importance of Swedish Unions in understanding the process of racialisation may in part be explained by emphasising that the LO (national union organisation) is in fact the largest organisation of migrants in Sweden. More than a fifth of LO's members have a migrant background defined as either foreign-born (13 percent) or as children of at least one foreign-born parent (8 per cent).

The Swedish trade union movement has been an important alternative to the male dominance in migrant organisations that many women have come to experience in diasporic communities. The presence of women in the union confirms research that has identified different career possibilities for migrant men and women (Jones-Correa 1998). Among Swedish political refugees there are many women with long experience of union activism. In a study on women and the union, Knocke (1991) demonstrated that almost everyone of the wage earning women from Yugoslavia and Chile had been organised in a union in their home country. The presence of women within the network FAI was evident, and some of the Latin American women that I have interviewed often had more than ten years of experience from union activism.

Imperial nostalgia (Rosaldo 1992) is a concept that grasps western fantasies about generous, happy and subordinated others. It is an important attribute in everyday negotiations within unions, especially when migrant women cannot or will not perform roles expected of their "cultures" to be consumed by the Swedish majority. Here the search for the "authentic" immigrant is revealed, the most "oppressed immigrant woman;" a search that is systematically utilised against the mobilization of migrant women:

*She told me that I was not Latin American, that she knew a lot of latino and that they were not like me... It may be because I do not dance salsa and I do not like tango. But I think it is because I said no when she wanted me to make empanadas for the annual meeting. And I want you to understand why I say*

*no. I do not have anything against making empanadas. But don't you think that after thirty years of empanadas... That thirty years should be enough, so that I can also speak and they can listen. So that I can be accepted as an equal member of the union and not as some poor thing from the Third World?*

Another form of representation that female activists are exposed to are racist assumptions of their sexuality. There are variations in the discourse on the sexuality of immigrant women – most of them hetero-normative. The first theme – "The White Prince" – is based on colonial fantasies of (beautiful) women who are to be "saved" from their own oppressive culture through heterosexual interaction with the "white" male as bearer of Civilisation. However, most women who identified themselves as Latinas (Lundström 2007) reported on experiences based on another theme, named by one informant as "the charter trip." In this discourse, women do not belong to a culture that is sexually controlling and oppressive, but to one with few, if any, rules, when it comes to sexual practices.

*When I went there my belly was aching, but I thought ok, this is not the worst thing that has ever happened to me.... Here, I was alone in my little room and I tried to comfort myself thinking that at least I'd been to Denmark for the first time. And then it was as it always is. No one was interested in me during the day, and then at night, when they had had half a bottle of whiskey in their room, then they approach me and say "I know a girl who knows a girl from your country, do you know her?" And I move to another table and he continues and won't stop and then he starts calling me Carmencita this and Carmencita that... They want you when it's time for salsa, for music and dance.*

The informant identifies a clear boundary between the discussion during the day, from which she is clearly excluded, and her presence as an exotic and eroticised being at night. Her interpretation of how the presence of the Other is desired in festive situations, but unwanted when decisions are to be made, captures with ethnographic precision the Swedish form of "multiculturalism" and illustrates a stable patriarchal colonial structure hidden behind the Swedish ideology of gender equality.

According to postcolonial Swedish feminists, racist and colonial constructions of differences between "us" and "them" have been central to discourses on gender equality as an essence of Swedishness. As the welfare regime has deteriorated, the generous and tolerant Swedish identity has weakened and changed. In this context, gender equality has been the only successful cultural product to function as an ethnic marker against those constructed as Others. In the words of Paulina de los Reyes and Irene Molina: "The gender equality discourse mediates values, norms and notions that create affinity between 'us Swedes' and distance to 'them,' the 'immigrants.'" (2002: 306, my own translation)

The idea of cultural difference often conceals the social and economic conditions (gendered forms of racism, racialised forms of class exploitation) that cause and prerequisite "eth-

nic cultures.” Postcolonial, antiracist and feminist intellectuals have stressed the importance of questioning representations of cultures and ethnicities. They have claimed that coherence and homogeneity are constructed through power, and often through the power of public and scientific texts. Systems of classification aim to categorise and single out groups in order to exclude them from economic and symbolic resources. These discourses have increased the criminalisation of migrant men as well as the homogenisation of highly diverse groups of migrant women into only one attribute: not belonging to the nation.

### Engendering nations, dislocating “home”

Mainstream discourses on political refugees and exile begin by recognizing and underlining the traumatic experience of being forced to leave your “own country” and confronted with a new and as it is often stated, different “culture.” Cultural theorist Paul Gilroy (1987) has suggested that there are strong links between popular notions of individuals’ and groups’ need for roots and the ways in which the links between belonging and place have been understood in sociology. Based on her study of Bosnian refugees in Sweden, social anthropologist Marita Estmond (1988) comes to a similar conclusion: research models, exile discourses and culturalist policies of receiving societies that are concerned with the consequences of people “uprooted” from their native countries reflect essentialised notions of identity and culture and may be seen as expressions of the nationalist logic of a “natural” relation between a people, a place and a culture.

To these hegemonic discourses evolving from the ideological state apparatus and the institutions of the welfare state, the official (male) discourse of exile culture based on an imperative need to return to the homeland and on nostalgia as the state of being in exile must be added (Abu Lughold 1988; Eastmond 1997). Constitutive of these discourses is the loss of home and the proclamation of life outside the nation as painful and worthless (Zarzosa 1998). There is, however, a strong subtext in all these narratives that connects nostalgia with patriarchal representations of who we are (or who we where) that according to my informants, often recreates through a male gaze, gender practices that have never existed:

*I am convinced that these idiots (the informant refers to some Latin American men) never met a Latin American woman in Latin America... the things they say about how our culture is, how things are there... more romantic, more family... women leaving everything for love... idiots... or small children... you choose.*

Women and men who embody subordinated forms of masculinity and femininity often explain that while exile is about loss, it is also about change and transformation and these changes are not necessarily always experienced in negative ways, especially for historically subordinated groups. Some of

my informants belong to groups that have been targets of racism in Latin America.

*They speak about how terrible things are... how they miss home... how racist the Swedish people are... Well I am a Maya woman. These people had to come to Europe to discover racism.*

In her study of Iranian political refugees in Holland Halleh Ghrorashi (1999) suggests that most women mentioned a feeling of homelessness in Iran which was more painful than the feeling of being in exile. The feeling of being a stranger back home bothered them the most.

*People ask if I feel at home in Sweden. But I lived in Chile during the dictatorship, and believe me there was no home there for us.*

Gender, I suggest, is a central (hierarchical) organising principle within the community that sharply defines different relationships to the Swedish welfare state for women and men. There is in my material a correlation between class/ethnic/sexual privileges before migration and criticism of the welfare state (George 1997). The transition from a “privileged leftist intellectual” to a working class migrant was more difficult for men than for women, who despite disagreements experienced that their reproductive task was alleviated and their life choices expanded by the Swedish welfare state. Experience of non-belonging, reported by some of my informants, is a crucial part of being a female political activist within male dominated movements of social protest. That the most painful experience of exile begins in Latin America is underlined in the narratives. The experience of exile is an experience of loss, but the ways in which these losses are named, acted upon and (if possible) healed, are gendered.

### State policies, culture(s) and gender(s)

Feminist cultural theorist Amy Kaminsky (1993) suggests that when consciousness of exile becomes pertinent, it is women who are invested with the responsibility of representing home. If women go beyond the boundaries of “home,” men not only lose control but also lose their link to home. Maria Graciela, a forty-three year old working class woman, illuminates the excluding narratives of nation and culture:

*And I told him [her brother in Chile], if you think Sweden is a sick country because homosexuals can marry, well I am also sick, I am a lesbian and that country that you think is sick is where I live.*

Most studies have shown that immigrants usually experience a decline in income and occupation status after arriving to Sweden. For many middle class professionals, arrival to Sweden meant having to do manual labour for the first time in

their lives. Furthermore, political defeat in the home country implied that many of them lost their status in political organizations. Privileged groups of men have tried to maintain their status by taking control over “ethnic” resources (newspapers, migrant organizations), a space that was closed to women both by Latin American males and by the Swedish welfare state, which allocated symbolic and material resources to migrant men. In this sense men controlled the space where status was based on what “we” were before (including the production of “new” cultural products and traditions like salsa or tango that were never part of the “we” in Latin America), not on what “we” are now. Women had no opportunities of leadership within the organizational structures or in their interaction with Swedish institutions:

*“Gender equality” is only for Swedes, it is for civilized people. When it comes to us, authorities want to speak to who they think is the leader of the tribe. Do not laugh. This is true. Do you know any Latin American women that have been supported by the Swedish authorities? Do you know any Latin American women working in magazines with state resources?*

While women were regarded as symbols of the community, men were supported by welfare institutions, constructed as representatives of “cultures.” This is detrimental to women, as only men are given legitimate voices, legitimate sources of “ethnic” incomes and the right to public forms of nostalgia and remembering. De Britto and Vazquez (1988) have stressed that in France the myth of the Latin American guerrillero helped to make Latin American men in exile accepted and even valued, so that even if disposed of power, they were seen in positive ways. The welfare state institutions’ emphasis and acceptance of these myths has not only disadvantaged Latin American women, but created and reinforced patriarchal relations within diasporic communities.

Most women I interviewed feel strong solidarity with men because of the racism that they have faced. Latinos in Sweden “went from being Che Guevara to dangerous criminals,” as one informant put it (Bredström 2002). Many of the women (single women, feminists, lesbians) grapple with the dilemma of identifying themselves as Latin American/latina (and defending the community against racist attacks), yet feeling uncomfortable and out of place in the Latin American community that demands a high degree of conformity, acceptance of the ideology of nostalgia, and through it, acceptance of male control over the community:

*Look, those that have not gone through this cannot understand...In my workplace I get in terrible fights when they speak about immigrant men...and then Saturday night you go to a party and there they are, some of them worse than the worst stereotypes...*

*All this racism, it’s like this and it’s like that. It shuts you up. I’ve stopped telling them things. I wanted to tell them about a guy I was mad at, but I didn’t say anything, because then the*

*guy’s whole culture would have been the focus of the coffee-break. I cannot stand that.*

While men’s access to migrant networks and resources support their dominance, the stereotypical image of machismo is contradicted by most women. An emergence of a more egalitarian division of labour in the household may be traced in some narratives of women living together with Latin American men.

*Things are ready when I come home...here there is nobody to help us, so he does a lot of work.*

*It is so unfair, ok some of them are as they are, but it is because of the racism and because nobody gives a damn here...but most of them have continued with their lives and are as good fathers and husbands as Swedes...*

But the ways in which patriarchal relations have changed are varied and contradictory. Recent studies of migration illuminate both the malleability and the tenacity of patriarchal power in migrant families. Jamaila tells me that because her husband has no friends, the family has been more united and they do all sorts of things together, like going to the swimming pool or playing tennis. She thinks that he is so involved in family life because he has not found any friends to connect with. For her, being in exile has functioned by creating a family life that that would be impossible in Colombia, because they would have to employ somebody to do the housework for them, they would work more and never meet the children. “Here” – she continues – “they have all these Swedish routines, the bath and brushing the teeth and the bedtime story and, well, adults are there for the children in other ways: *he has nothing else to do.*”

Exile and forced migration have in this case reinforced the nuclear family despite women’s economic independence and stable employment. While Maria decided to come out as a lesbian and Julia to get rid of her husband when she considered that he was going out too much to political meetings, for Jamaila migration and exile have reinforced bonding between her and her husband. The argument that there is a link between the nostalgia discourse and male control over the community is more pertinent for women who have been confronted with patriarchal power through marginalisation. Women who have stayed together with their husbands (as they themselves often put it), voice the argument that living together with Latin American men is easier because they understand racism.

*I would not like to come home and be forced to explain...and then have a three hours’ discussion about whether what happened to me was really racism...we had a serious crisis some years ago and I met a Swedish guy and he was sweet but all this work to explain racism...no I stay with my old guy...we understand what we go through.*

The centrality of the maternal within Latin American culture has been identified as interlinked to a particular kind of male

dominance: machismo conceived as the historical product of the impact of the Catholic Church and the Spanish colonization of Latin America. The term machismo has often been used in feminist research to grasp the specific character of patriarchy in the region. Critical ethnographers have asserted that marianismo and machismo can also be understood as an anthropological invention of culture that silences diversity and differences (Montecino 1992). Without a sense of the relationship between hegemonic ideologies of gender and everyday cultural practices the explanatory power of the categories of machismo and marianismo runs the danger of developing into some kind of feminist folklore that provides representations of Latin American women as passive victims and suffering mothers.

Stereotypical views assert that Latino families in particular, and migrant families in general are characterised by violent forms of machismo with cruel men and submissive women. This claim is grounded in the notion that machismo is “traditional” among Latino (and migrant) families; a claim that silences processes of gender struggle and gender confrontation in migration. Black and postcolonial feminist research challenges the idea that extreme forms of patriarchy characterise all Latino and migrant families. Several studies suggest that the increase in migrant women’s contributions to the family economy, concomitant with migrant men’s declining economic resources, accounts for the diminution of male dominance in most families (Sotelo-Hondagneu 1992). In the Swedish context, the social policies of a women-friendly welfare state must be taken into account. Boundaries between the public and the private have been negotiated and contested in ways that often empower women and children.

### (Transnational) families

Recognition of the narrow and problematic understanding of the world that is embodied in the word ‘migrant’ has evolved in the last few years. Social scientific concepts that link location to culture and identity in deterministic ways strongly limit researchers’ possibilities to analyze the ways people live their lives. The notion of transnationalism illuminates migrants’ practices of building social fields across geographic, cultural and political borders and maintaining multiple relationships (Brah 1992).

Postcolonial theory underlines the powerful position of those living “in between” by claiming that people who move between cultures, languages and diverse constellations of power and meaning in complex post-colonial situations develop an oppositional consciousness, an ability to read and write culture on multiple levels. The notion of borderlands as developed by the Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa (1991) is one illustration of this standpoint. The emphasis on the empowering experience of being in between must be, however, understood as a response to mainstream social scientific representations of migrants and “second” generation that often create pathologies grounded in the notion of stable iden-

tities and fixed national spaces. The data from my research project on the Latin American community in Sweden tends to suggest that new fields of gender hierarchies, struggles and negotiations evolve in transnational families.

Most studies of transnational practices have focused on the flows of money, cultural products and people. Erik Ols-son (1997) has studied these processes in the Latin American community in Sweden and captured them with the title *Living Near an Airport*. I want to illuminate the forms of cultural creativity through which women expand both space and place and (re)construct family and community.

*Well, you know we could never get married in Colombia. We were against marriage but then we came to Sweden... and I felt I wanted to do it... have a party. So we told our families that we were going to marry and that we were going to make a video, to record the whole ceremony so that they could be here with us... You know what they did? The two families made a film themselves. They dressed as for a wedding and in the first scene they were there... my family all well dressed, wishing us good luck. What was very moving were those people who spoke but whom we had never met, those who said dear aunty I do not know you but I hope we can meet soon... You can watch the video. We got it as a present on the day of our wedding.*

This quote shows the centrality of new technologies in the everyday practice of transnationalism. But the narrative also illuminates the making of transnational families where kinship relations and household belongings expand across the boundaries of national states. This informant’s narrative also explores the changing meaning of rituals and cultural practices within a transnational context. While a marriage ceremony was quite unthinkable for this feminist and left activist in Colombia, the same ceremony turned to be not only necessary but vital in the context of forced migration and exile.

But the making of transnational families is regulated by ideologies of gender that locate women and men differently in transnational communities. While migration and exile have implied several and serious changes in (and challenges to) patriarchal relations within the family, one of the areas where, according to my material, few changes have occurred is women’s responsibility towards the sick and the old “back home.” Strategies vary greatly. Some of my informants send money monthly to (often) a sister or another female relative that takes the responsibility of the care work, others engage in family (re)unions.

What happens when those who are supposed to care live somewhere else? How do those that are supposed to care feel when they are unable to care? Some researchers speak about the expansion of new care-chains (Anderson 2000). This new, international division of care labour is illuminated by one of my informants:

*I will never forget. First the phone calls from different members of the family saying different things. You have to come now. No wait. And then the community. I know that they do*

*these things because they care but, you are desperate and then they begin to tell you how terrible it is if you are not there when they die and you feel you are a bad person, trying to manage your work and everything. And then I get there and my mother is getting a little bit better and my sister has arranged with a nana to take care of her. We pay her 500 dollars. I can send that amount of money from home (from Sweden). And you know what? The nana is from Peru and she is working in Santiago taking care of my mother, while sending money to Lima for her mother at the same time that I send money from Sweden to pay her to take care of my mother. It felt wrong. It is a mess.*

It is interesting to note that gender negotiations take place in the private realm; the Swedish welfare state gives little support to Swedish citizens in transnational families:

*I will never understand. I paid taxes since the day I came to this country. I have worked for the last thirty years. I cleaned all that was possible to clean in this country. And when I go and ask the social security if I can take ten days (and I went there because my colleagues at work told me that you can get ten days) they treated me as if I was a criminal trying to steal money from them.*

Nearly without exceptions, most of the diverse group of women that I talked to both reflected and positioned themselves towards the cultural notion that transnational care-work was culturally defined as women's work. Paradoxically, the construction of women as care givers is not challenged, but rather expanded when women are involved (as many of my informants where) in paid work.

*It is work. They tell you that well, it is important to be there, that you will feel bad if you are not there... but you have to travel and that means money and a lot of arrangements with the job and... I work as a nurse and my friends at work took my passes every time I need to take care of my mother until I could take her home... (to Sweden). It is not that all men are so, but men are not, well they can choose.*

The two following quotes are from two informants who were arguing against a third person, illuminating the presence of critical voices within the community that have challenged the gender contract:

*Well, some women think that it is unfair but well I do this because I need it. It is true that men only travel for rituals and many men do not do that either, and that they are always unemployed so they can never send money...but who says they feel fine about that?*

*You cannot come with this feminist thing when it is about life and death and family. You cannot count love as you count money. My parents did a lot of sacrifices for my brothers and me and of course I want to take care of them, now that they*

*need me. It is not about feminism as here in Sweden, it is about family and love, as we understand it.*

Graciela, the last, contrasts feminism (in her understanding a coded Swedish practice) with love as the imagined 'we' of the transnational community. She further suggests, like Maria also does in the first quote, that care work is affective work inspired by the recognition of belonging and kinship and as such, more a right than an obligation. According to Maria, men's experience of loss is stronger, because these practices are so central to human well-being. It is, however, important to underline that even if there is disagreement about the status of transnational care work within the Latino community, the practice is generally depicted as gendered.

Feminist research on the welfare state has pointed out the narrowness of models of welfare based on a male breadwinner as the norm and argued for the need to develop alternative models based on care work. While these models have been highly relevant in illuminating the tensions between neutral social policies and the gendered lives of citizens, they often lack an understanding of the ways through which cultural notions of normality and (national and ethnic) belonging are embedded in social policies targeting families and households and creating clear boundaries between those that belong to the nation and those that do not.

## Reflections

Sociologists (like myself) often represent themselves as having a perspective that their informants lack – an understanding of identities as constructed, contextual and partial. The informant is represented as a prisoner of essentialist and fixed notions of culture and identity and confronted with the authoritative voice of the researcher who knows how culture, ethnicity (and gender) are produced. The material evolving from my fieldwork reveals that informants are quite conscious of the constructed or fragmented nature of their identities and of the contextual and negotiated dynamic of the culture they so strongly suggest is theirs. Discourses of the authenticity of cultures are present, but coexist with a notion of culture as negotiated and diversified.

Contrary to what is commonly believed, the women I interviewed did not emphasise cultural differences between Latin America and Sweden in their narratives. Their focus was often on the gendered racism of the Swedish welfare state and the forms of everyday racism they experience. Contrary to what is commonly believed, struggle against gender hierarchies was central to women's lives before migration, and these struggles are important clues to understanding both their migration patterns and their relation to exile narratives. Women's narratives also illuminate their resistance to discourses that present living outside one's country of origin as a fracturing and traumatic experience, and their highly ambivalent relationship to discourses of national belonging and essentialised forms of ethnicity.

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Garbi Schmidt

## Transnational Families among Turks and Pakistanis in Denmark: Good Subjects, Good Citizens and Good Lives

### Abstract

For the last decade, Denmark has witnessed a heated debate over ethnic minority marriage. The discussion highlights what are perceived as innate aspects of transnational marriages: they are seen as something hindering the social integration of immigrants into Danish mainstream, and even as a potential threat to national values. In the first part of this article I take Foucault's descriptions of the modern state's exercise of power as a starting point for my analysis of these current debates. One aspect that I analyze is whether state legislation on family unification can be seen communicating models for "the good subject and good citizen", implementing tactics of "self-government", and targeting specific fields of individual action in the process? In the second part of this article I move to another field where good subjects and good lives are moulded: transnationally based families. How do processes of making family, of marrying, exemplify the making of Self as a good subject in fields that certainly include and largely are dominated by the norms and regulations of the nation state but also transcend such geographical boundaries? How do young people, who have family in diverse geographic settings negotiate and manoeuvre between expectations of "good lives," potentially cross-cutting and challenging the relationships of power they are part? In what situations are such negotiations impossible, and why?

*"There are two meanings of the word subject: Subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugated and makes subject to."* (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 216).

### Introduction

The theoretical basis for this article lies in this double meaning of the concept of "subject:" that of being "subject" to a governing power – a nation state; and that of an individual being "subject" to him- or herself, determining the self-molding processes that humans undergo in the social world they are part of.

To Foucault the "exercise of power" is established in relationships, in social networks and in communication (e.g. Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 213). Foucault's focus on power as a process that includes not only certain privi-

leged agents' use of power but also the active acceptance and involvement of those subjected to power is, for example, reflected in his description of the modern nation state:

*I don't think that we should consider "the modern state" as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence, but on the contrary as a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form and submitted to a set of very specific patterns* (ibid. 214).

In the first part of this article I use Foucault's descriptions of the modern state's exercise of power as a starting point for my analysis of current debates over family reunification in Denmark – especially when such family reunifications imply transnational marriages. What, in my mind, is particularly interesting in the Danish case is exactly how state institutions and legislation seek to create docile subjects within the immigrant

population by implementing tactics of “self-government” — of creating tools through which the subject can be “shaped in new forms.” Interesting in this context in particular is how the state and state actors communicate models for “the good subject and good citizen” and what specific fields of individual action are specifically targeted — e.g., through legislation — as areas productive for such subjectification.

In the second part of this article I use examples of how processes of moulding the subject take place within transnationally based families. What do processes of making family, of marrying, reveal about the making of — and creating of — the self as a good subject in fields that certainly include and largely are dominated by the norms and regulations of the nation state but also transcend such geographical boundaries? The central question is whether having family in diverse geographic settings leaves young people in a favourable position to strategically negotiate and manoeuvre between expectations of “good lives,” potentially cross-cutting and challenging the relationships of power they are part. In what situations are such negotiations impossible, and why?

### Moulding the national subject

The Danish debate over transnational marriages has accelerated since the mid-1990s (Bredal). Although substantial migration to Denmark began in the 1960s, it was not until the mid-1990s that partner choice among ethnic minorities became the subject of a heated national debate. The discussion was initiated by, among others, ethnic minority organizations reporting an increase in calls from young people facing forced marriage, and newspaper articles describing individual cases and their sometimes fatal outcomes (Bredal 1999; Rytönen 2002, 25ff). Politically, the debate cleared the path for an amendment to the new Alien Act of 1997; the amendment stated that a “residence permit cannot... be granted if the marriage is not a result of mutual agreement among others than the couple marrying” (Foreigners Law, 1997). From then on, the primary means of limiting forced marriage have been legislation (the Alien Act and Marriage Act, including several changes since 1997), social work initiatives (counselling between young people and parents, shelters for young women), and research (e.g. Schmidt & Jacobsen 2004).

Undoubtedly, being forced into marriage is a terrible experience for any person subjected to such a practice. However, the question of how and why the issue of transnational marriage(s) has gained such a central role in the Danish state’s and political discourses’ formulation of ethnic minorities, I argue, deserves deep analytical scrutiny: Why exactly is this question being raised on all sides of the political spectrum, when empirical evidence accessing the extent of the problem has been limited both before and after the legislation went into effect (Schmidt & Jacobsen)? We know that suspicion of forced marriage ranks low in the annual statistics of declined applications for residence permits based on marriage. In 2003,

five applications were refused on suspicion of forced marriage — in 2006 the number was 29 (Danish Immigration Service).

Michel Foucault, I argue, offers insights valuable for understanding the underlying structures of (in this particular case) the Danish nation state’s choosing marriage as a field of action when dealing with immigrants. Although such rules undoubtedly also highlight attempts to abide by international charters on human rights, ratified by the Danish state, there is a discrepancy between the known proportion of forced marriages and the massive legislative effort to limit the amount of transnational marriages — particularly by the argument of preventing forced marriages. I find it noteworthy that Foucault describes the family (regardless of ethnic affiliation) as both influential within the nation state and a means through which the modern nation state upholds its power. The family is an agent upholding the health and well-being of individuals, establishing aspects of “security” that are important to the modern nation state. The family is a fixed point — a point of transition — through which the state can exercise power. Both the institution of the family and the field of sexuality (to which the institution of the family is closely connected) stand out as important arenas for the nation state’s exercise of power over the individual. Or, to put it differently: The institution of the family and the practice of sexuality are important areas where the governmentality of the subject takes place. Therefore, I argue that what happens within families, not least in terms of how the family establishes norms of sexuality, become important for the state’s drawing a normative line between the good subject (or citizen) and the divergent subject (divergent citizen). It is thus understandable that norms of family life and sexuality within immigrant families become both the means by which these families are measured and the arenas in which the state seeks to establish a foothold of exercising governmentality.

To return to the Danish example: The current Danish legislative effort targeting ethnic minority families and marriages taking place within ethnic minority groups is one example of how a Western nation state tries to establish this foothold of governmentality within a group of people who fall outside the range of historically established norms of how families function within that country. The effort can, on the one hand, be seen as targeting the ethnic minority family as an institution and, on the other hand, as a means of ultimately governing and shaping the individual within the family. The latter purpose of the new regulations is particularly well illustrated by the Declaration of Integration and Active Citizenship, a document that any foreigner coming to Denmark to obtain residency has been expected to sign since 2006. Rather than represent itself as a binding juridical document, the declaration states the intention to make visible to immigrants the values that Danish society builds upon. By signing the declaration, the migrant acknowledges these values.<sup>1</sup>

The Declaration deals at length with familyhood and sexuality. Out of the text’s 18 points, no fewer than five deal explicitly with aspects of family life and reproduction, such as the two following points.

*[As a resident in Denmark I acknowledge that] ...I know that any exercise of violence and use of force against one's spouse is prohibited.*

*I know that circumcision of girls and the use of force when entering marriage are illegal acts in Denmark.*

Although the Declaration of Integration and Active Citizenship describes itself as a document without any juridical binding, the document is nonetheless binding as a declaration of knowledge. When the immigrant publicly states to have this knowledge, he or she simultaneously submits to the intent, the norms, and the values of the declaration. By subjecting himself or herself to a certain kind of knowledge, the individual subjects himself or herself to the actualization of that knowledge. The individual allows the knowledge to actively influence his or her life: the process of subjectification – and, essentially, governmentality – has begun.

The Danish situation exemplifies what Foucault in his later writings called a crisis of government, caused by the challenges of globalization (see e.g. Lemke 2003) – in this case in the form of migration. The examples that I have presented so far, I suggest, present one way of dealing with this new, global problem of government. Rather than inventing new means for handling the crisis, the nation state fights with the tools it has. What we can say is that what comes from the outside – whether clothed in the faceless concept of globalization or the faced subject of the immigrant – is treated as rebellion in the inside and as such, a perversion. By regulating aspects of transnational marriages, the state seeks, through its subjects, to secure the position of governmentality within a globalized world.

### Strategies of self-creation in the transnational field

The empirical data for the following description and analysis contains of two life stories. Both stories are taken from a study involving interviews with 20 individuals of Pakistani and Turkish decent living in Denmark. Interviews were carried out between the fall of 2006 and the fall of 2007.<sup>2</sup> Basing my analysis on two stories, I cannot make any claims about general trends within the groups I am describing. However, dwelling on two life stories and describing them extensively allows me to analyse in detail the two aspects that are central for this article's second purpose: How processes of subjectification and relations of strategy are played out transnationally.

Transnational marriage is illustrative of these processes because marriage as a process and institution highlights the symmetry of *relational autonomy* (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000). To grasp this concept from a theoretical perspective, I combine Foucault's ideas on subjectification with Anthony Giddens' theories of self-identity in the late-modern era. My particular reason for using Giddens has less to do with the consistent underpinning of human autonomy in his work and more with his focus on the modern self as a reflexive project. Gid-

dens describes the self as a narrative, balancing between poles of possibilities and risks (Giddens 1991). As a narrative, the self relates to time; as a reflexive project, to the multitude of alternative ways of life that the individual chose not to follow. At the conjunction of these two qualities of self, life planning becomes particularly important: "Life planning occurs in the context of who one is... and it is a conception for the further construction of the self as one wishes it to be" (Jacobs 2001: 4).

Giddens' idea that human autonomy is necessary to becoming "who one is" at first appears to clash with Foucault's idea that freedom inherently relates to power: that power is exercised on the basis of individual freedom. Power is "a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action" (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 220). The paradox of subjectification is – as Saba Mahmood writes – that "the very processes that secure a subject's subordination are also the means by which she becomes a self-conscious identity and agent" (Mahmood 2005: 17). Human self-constitution is always "proposed, suggested and imposed on [ourselves] by [our] culture, [our] society and [our] social group" (Foucault in Bernauer and Rasmussen 1988: 11).

However, we may find concordance between the ideas of Foucault and Giddens in their common notion that human action includes aspects of human reflexivity. Foucault sees freedom as a stage on which the individual or a collective faces a "field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized" (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 221). Here we can draw a line to Giddens' idea of the self as a reflexive project. Further, this perspective allows us to see the individual as a *strategic* player – within and potentially between – relations of power.

The stories of Laila and Gülsüm – two women of respectively Pakistani and Turkish background – illustrate this dynamic between human reflexivity, subjectification and strategic action, and potentially, of governance. In both cases, marriage takes a central position as a moment in time when the influence and interplay of the three aspects become particularly apparent. Although similar processes could probably be observed among couples married within mono-national contexts, I argue that by focusing on transnational marriages as a prism for these processes, we can clarify the role of the individual as a strategic player.

#### Laila

Laila, a young woman of Pakistani descent in her mid-twenties, was born in Denmark. Her extended family has crossed several national boundaries as long as she can recall. Except for one aunt who still lives in Pakistan, all other family members live in Europe or the United States. Laila's father decided to move to Europe after visiting a brother in Birmingham, England. On his way back to Pakistan he stopped over in Copenhagen which he liked much more than Birmingham, and decided to settle there. Laila says that so many family

members left Pakistan because of their zest for adventure. Further, the more people settled elsewhere, the easier it became for others to follow. For example, family members who lived in the United States sponsored other family members' trips to that country – and their eventual settlement.

Laila met her husband in a place where their physical features remained hidden for a long time: in an internet chat room. Laila describes the use of internet as something that immigrant families started using much earlier than the majority population. Why and how she found herself in this particular chat room was a matter of fortunate circumstances. As the members of her extended family use chat rooms to stay in touch, they eagerly share information on new Pakistani diaspora websites that have free online communication. Laila and her husband-to-be – who at that point lived in Canada – started chatting one evening when Laila tried out one of those new websites. The couple soon found out that they shared similar life situations. Laila's family had recently discussed whether the time had not come for her to marry, and her aunt had suggested her cousin as a suitable match. But Laila simply could not imagine the cousin as her husband, causing some family turmoil. At the same time, in Canada, her husband-to-be, Imran, had just refused his family's suggestion that he married his cousin. Therefore, during their initial meetings in the chat room they discovered that they had more to talk about and share than the trivialities of life. And, as Laila recalls, the Internet granted the couple a unique option for talking privately in ways that were otherwise unusual or directly impossible according to what she calls "the common culture."

Laila and Imran chatted regularly for six months before deciding to marry. Sometimes they called each other on the phone, and Imran actually proposed to Laila one evening. At that point they had never met face to face and only knew how the other person looked from what Laila describes as "some incredibly ugly photos." Actually Laila was content that she did not meet Imran before their wedding, because what she found especially important were the spiritual values that they shared.

One important question still remained: how should they go about telling their parents? As Laila says, "finding each other the way we did was atypical. And I felt that telling my parents how we had found each other was a huge burden. Somehow just saying 'listen, I've met a guy on the Internet' sounded really great. [But] I simply could not say it. I did not know how to do it."

Finally a solution came up. The couple found out that both Imran's elder sister and one of Laila's cousins had a common friend in Pakistan. Through these two family members, based in Western countries, a link was made in the country of origin, thereby giving the young couple the negotiating strategy that the two families were not strangers. Laila's father traveled to Canada to meet with the potential in-laws. The meeting turned out well, and both families accepted the match. The next question was where the couple should settle. Although their first choice was Canada, after September 11 Denmark suddenly appeared easier to live in. Their wedding took place in Den-

mark, with only their immediate families attending. Soon after the wedding they moved into the house where they now live. Due to Imran's education as a medical doctor, he soon found a job. And given that they married a couple of months before the new legislation on family reunification went into effect, the only area where the new legislation had an impact was that they could not live with Laila's parents – a custom that was formerly common for a newly-wed couple.

Laila says that her choice of spouse has made her more aware of some aspects of her cultural heritage: First, religion, which she describes as important, and second, language. Both aspects highlight fundamental values that she wants to build her life upon:

*Earlier I was convinced that the basic [value] for me was that I married a Muslim. Whether he was Dane or Italian was of less importance to me. But I gradually realized that the language was incredibly important to me. Language is culture, too. There is so much in language that I had to marry someone who spoke the same language. Not necessarily Danish, but someone who besides knowing Danish knew my mother tongue.*

### **Gülsüm**

Gülsüm, in her early 30s, lives in a large provincial town in Denmark. As with Laila, Gülsüm's father arrived in Denmark in the late 1960s. For several years he commuted between Denmark and Turkey, where his wife and two younger children still lived. When Gülsüm was four, her father decided to bring his family to Denmark. Gülsüm explains that as a child she was very close to her mother – perhaps because she was the youngest daughter. Her close ties to her family are obvious in her current life, as she lives within walking distance from her parents' home. Gülsüm says that as a teenager she rebelled against her parents' norms, often doing things that went contrary to how they believed a "good girl" should behave. Whereas her elder sister was never allowed to go to high school camps, Gülsüm kept pestering her parents until they let her go.

Gülsüm married Ali, a man from Turkey, when she was in her early 20s. She describes her marriage as "partially arranged, partially not." Ali was not the first man to ask for her hand. When Gülsüm as a younger woman had visited Turkey on summer vacations, suitors came for tea every day. Gülsüm hated the visits, and often started crying or quarreling with her parents when the suitor left. Today she says that her strong reactions came from her insecurity about whether her parents intended to marry her off without her consent. Further, she did not always take the flattering words of the young men and their families at face value. Gülsüm knew that her female cousins in Turkey had only a few suitors, and she was convinced that some of the young men to whom she politely served tea in her family's house saw her simply as a means of getting into Denmark. She also detested her parents' dragging her into the living room to tell the offended parents of suitors

than she was not interested in marrying their son. Some parents simply did not believe that Gülsüm could say no, interpreting the refusal as a sign of her parents' disrespect.

When Gülsüm's parents suggested that she meet Ali, she was naturally skeptical. The suggestion came in early summer while the family was still in Denmark. Gülsüm was resentful about visiting Turkey that year. She was afraid that her parents expected her to marry while there, especially because they knew the family of the new suitor really well. Long discussions involving other family members followed, and in the end a brother-in-law gave his word that if Gülsüm traveled to Turkey, she was still free to say no to Ali. He even paid for her airfare – roundtrip.

When Ali's family came to visit, Gülsüm served coffee and tea, exchanging a few words with them. She did not speak to Ali, as she found any direct contact embarrassing. But she liked him, and when the families later that day suggested that the young couple go out alone for dinner, she accepted. In Gülsüm's words the offer was both generous and unusual towards an unmarried couple. Over the next few weeks Gülsüm and Ali visited tourist sites, museums and cafés by themselves. Three days before her return to Denmark, Ali proposed and she accepted.

In the period between the proposal and the wedding, Gülsüm and Ali were allowed to do things that she describes as uncommon. On New Year's Eve they and one of Gülsüm's cousins stayed together in an apartment in the city that Ali's family came from. Further, the couple had a great deal of influence on their wedding. For instance, they could decide what they wanted as dowry from their parents. Gülsüm recalls her father-in-law saying that "it is fine that we sit here and discuss [the dowry] but shouldn't we ask the bride and groom, after all, it's their future?"

Gülsüm described the relationship with her family-in-law as good. That marriage has bound two families together across borders has caused a negotiation of norms and values, for example, in relation to the role of a young married woman. Gülsüm says that already when the families were negotiating the marriage, her mother made her future parents-in-law aware of her skills:

*I want you to know that my daughter has been to school all her life. She is not even good at cleaning dishes, because I have been the one to stay at home and take care of the house. She has done nothing else but taking care of her homework and friends. So do not expect her to cook or bake, or to clean dishes. She will learn, but these are skills she has not learned." And their reply was, "That's fine, we do not want a servant. If the young couple gets along, that's what is most important."*

Gülsüm's mother-in-law has told her that she finds her independence fascinating. At the same time Gülsüm is eager to learn as much as possible about doing things "right" as a married Turkish woman, thus frequently following her mother-in-law around the house, trying to pick up her ways of cooking, cleaning and caring for her family.

While Gülsüm says that she abides by Danish norms and values, she also says that she is increasingly aware of Turkish customs and norms. Whenever she visits Turkey, she always buys books for her young daughter to make sure that she learns Turkish. The cultural cocktail that she describes herself as being, has given her the ability to see what, as she puts it, the best ingredients of the two countries are, and to pass these qualities on to her children.

As Gülsüm married just before the Danish 24-year rule was put into action, she has not faced any direct consequences of the law. She sees the rules as expressing double standards. If the government has argued that the purpose of the rules is to limit forced marriages, then why should they hamper young people's free choice of falling in love and marrying a person who lives outside Danish borders? Isn't the legislation, Gülsüm asks sarcastically, expressing another kind of force?

When I asked Gülsüm if she ever considered marrying someone outside her ethnic group, she answered:

*I think it is nice that we come from the same culture, that is, without saying, culture and religion, that one has the same background. In case he had a different religious background we would have been black and white in some respects. When I visited my family-in-law I would have to abide by their rules – something that I do not do now, because I am myself. I do not have to fake anything, which I dislike, because I have always been honest... On the other hand I have always insisted that I should marry a Muslim man, but I was open to someone who already was not Muslim but who would become Muslim. Several of my friends have married Danish men who have converted to Islam.*

## Analysis: Strategies and negotiations

Laila's and Gülsüm's stories exemplify how family life is played out across borders. In this section I want to reflect on (1) how the two stories reflect the women's strategic use of space, and (2) how space is a means for power structures, embedded in relationships (e.g. those embedded in social structures such as families) to maintain their position in a global world. Two concepts cross-cutting my description are strategy and negotiation.

The stories of Laila and Gülsüm illustrate the strategic roles that individuals are allowed to play in transnational contexts. In several instances the women play these roles so well that they – from a reflexive point of view – gain something that they feel is valuable to their life projects. Sometimes these gains are made through what we, according to Foucault, could call a "confrontation strategy" (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 225). By playing on the apparent difference – and eventual power gap – between two relational power structures, the individual can eventually use space to rule out the one relation that she finds unattractive.

The story of Gülsüm is illustrative in that respect: Sitting in Denmark and initially refusing to travel to Turkey to meet

her future husband, she is in a position to negotiate the conditions of the meeting. Important to her is that she can return to Denmark, without marrying, if she wants to. In other cases, the individual avoids confrontation by carving out a parallel space, exemplified by Laila and Imran's use of a chat room to talk privately in ways that are otherwise uncommon to an unmarried couple in the circles to which they belong. The creation of a parallel space (e.g., an internet chat room) is obviously an attractive way of establishing individual autonomy. However, the moment that an individual makes a decision in this parallel space, the process of implementing it involves either confronting or submitting to the existing relational power structures outside that parallel world. Here, the case of Imran and Laila is again illustrative: when the couple decides to marry, they have to develop a strategy for gaining the acceptance of their families. By referring to a common link in Pakistan, the young couple can argue that their relationship is culturally acceptable: Their families, at least symbolically, know each other.

Gülsüm's and Laila's stories may modify a frequently raised assumption in the Danish public debate in Denmark, that transnational marriages often come about through force. Although the two stories are not representative, they illustrate that even though the two women abide by social norms, their acts are produced in a strategic and often highly conscious game involving different relations and spaces. Gülsüm and Laila describe how they in many instances are able to play this game to their own advantage. However, their stories also show that other players – not only families, but also the existing sentiments and legislation within a nation – strongly affect the lives and choices of those whom they consider “their” subject, sometimes making the involved individual describe herself as forced or trapped. In these situations the importance of space is also apparent. When Gülsüm visits Turkey she obviously feels trapped in a situation she dislikes: she quarrels with her parents about their intentions for her, dislikes visits from suitors and their families, and hates being expected to serve them tea and having to defend her parents when the visitors do not believe her refusals. Further, both women reflect on how existing or developing discourses and regulations within nation states affect their lives as married couples. In Laila's case the resentment against Muslims in the wake of September 11, 2001, make her and her husband choose to settle in Denmark. Similarly, Gülsüm describes the Danish legislation on family formation as legitimating the exercise of force.

Laila's and Gülsüm's stories illustrate how individuals establish “good lives” in transnational spaces, based on individual strategies, sometimes furthered by and sometimes inhibited by those relational power structures within which they are entrenched. What interests me is how the women are highly aware of these power relations, especially when they attempt to exercise power in ways that counter what they see as their life projects. Gülsüm's story is telling in that regard, particularly when she describes her feeling of entrapment in Turkey and her anger with the Danish state preventing people from freely choosing a spouse. To put the situation

differently, arguments of force arise when the individual is deprived of the option for negotiation.

The importance of negotiation as a means of establishing a good life is especially obvious when the women talk about culture. To both women culture – the sharing of language and religion – is an essential building block of marriage. I find Laila's remark about herself and her husband (both raised in the West) as “sharing” these practices a remarkable example of how people use the concept of culture to define concordance and consensus in action, even though their practice of “culture,” which they have negotiated within their particular marriage, in many ways differs from the practice of that culture in, say, the country of origin. In the same vein we can recall Gülsüm's presentation of herself as “a cultural cocktail,” a quality she wants to pass on to her children. What I find important is that both Laila's and Gülsüm's stories show that strategic actions do not necessarily include confrontation with or annihilation of the other (to use Foucault's terms), but rather, *negotiation* between relationships of power and ultimately between the individuals embedded in these relations. How negotiations take place within the entity of the family is illustrated when Gülsüm recalls her mother-in-law's fascination with her independence, and when she describes her own attempts to learn how a Turkish housewife traditionally takes care of her home. Finally, Gülsüm's description of young Danish men's conversion to Islam when marrying a Turkish woman illustrates that negotiations of norms and relations of power also take place in wider social contexts, in some cases involving a reversal of influence between minority and majority populations.

## Conclusion

Starting with Foucault's theories of relations of power and governmentality, I set out to investigate two perspectives on the immigrant subject, one characterized by the state's ambition to govern, and another characterized by individual negotiations of self in transnational spaces. The first half of my article analyzed the Danish debate over arranged and forced marriage and the dominant discourses in Danish political life on how immigrants “make family.” Foucault's theories were useful in explaining why the issue of marriage and family in particular rank so high within state attempts to regulate the lives of immigrant subjects. The new regulations target aspects of what the subject is expected to be within the framework of the nation-state, and, ultimately, how the subject is expected to mold and discipline herself.

Foucault's theories have proven helpful in the analysis of the Danish debate over forced marriages, granting us one way of understanding why debates over immigrants and regulations of such new citizens frequently deal with issues of norms, values, religion, and sex. In this arena the nation state obviously still plays a central role. What is interesting is that the means that the nation state applies in fighting what some see as an intruding force are not new; rather, they comprise parts of the arsenal that the nation state has relied on since its inception.

When analyzing regimes of power, discourses, nation states, and globalization, we must not forget that we are ultimately dealing with the practices of human beings. Just as nation states have their ways of dealing with the challenges of globalization, so do individuals seek to carve out a space, a “good life,” within or eventually across state borders. The life stories of Laila and Gulsüm have been illustrative in that regard. The stories show that although individual autonomy is certainly entrenched within relations, the individual may move strategically between and within them, thus negotiating what she finds to be the right way ahead. That these processes of self-creation are not free from limitations, regulations, or sanctions is also clear from the two stories. More broadly, the stories underline how subjectification is both a reflexive and strategic process, in which the aspect of negotiation is important.

The concept of transnational subjectification is useful for those of us who in research circles and in broader public spheres attempt to explain the complexity of individual autonomy vs. (for example) the power of extended family networks, when a young person of immigrant background marries. At least in Denmark this particular topic is frequently portrayed in the public as a process of *either* autonomy *or* use of force, and research so far has contributed to this distinction rather than modified by it. By focusing on processes of subjectification as a reality that people of immigrant background (just like everybody else) face, and by describing this dynamics as embedded in relations and places in which the individual is an active player, we may recognize that power is persistent as a part of human relationships and that power is powerless without human agency, including on the individual level.

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## Notes

- 1 Integrationskontrakten og erklæringen om integration og aktivt medborgerskab I det danske samfund. Copenhagen: Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs.
- 2 Interviews were conducted by the author and Nadja Jeltoft. Nadja deserves credit for her enthusiastic and skilful work indispensable for this study.

Jeannette Laurén and Sirpa Wrede

## Immigrants in Care Work: Ethnic Hierarchies and Work Distribution

### Abstract

Due to the threatening shortage of labour in care work and particularly in elderly care, the recruitment of foreign care workers and the employment of immigrants in care work have become suitable solutions to the problem in Finnish public debate. In this article, we explore ethnicity from the point of view of the organization of care work, in which ethnicity emerges as a new hierarchical logic beside divisions such as gender and educational hierarchies. Our focus is the institutional level, on which we apply Hugman's (1991) concept of institutional racism. The exploratory study is based on 15 thematic interviews with immigrant and ethnic Finnish practical nurses. Our analysis focuses on the creation of hierarchies through workplace practices concerning the distribution of tasks and on the labour management mechanisms that create opportunities for hierarchies to emerge. We also discuss challenges to the organization in terms of the promotion of equality implied by the inclusion of immigrants into the workforce. We contend that conflicts concerning work tasks are possible because of the hierarchical organization of care work, the vagueness of the practical nurse's work role, as well as indistinct labour management and its failure to take power differences into consideration.

### Introduction

The history of immigration to Finland is fairly recent. It was only in the 1980s that Finland went from being a sending country to a country of immigration, but still, most immigrants were Finnish returnees (Korkiasaari & Söderling 1998:4). The early 1990s implied the beginning of a rapid increase in the number of arriving immigrants (Forsander 2002). The proportion of the foreign-born population is still low compared to many other immigration countries. The foreign-born population amounted to 3,6 percent in 2006 compared to the average of 12 percent in the OECD countries (OECD 2008; Statistics Finland 2007). However, the rate of increase in the immigration to Finland is among the highest in comparison with the other OECD countries (OECD 2008). The concentration of immigrants is highest in the Helsinki metropolitan area, with inhabitants of foreign origin constituting about 9 percent of the population in Helsinki (City of Helsinki Health Centre 2008).

At present the recruitment of foreign care workers is frequently raised in Finnish public debates as a solution to the

threatening care labour shortage. This development that is well known from other countries (e.g. Buchan et al. 2003; Clark et al. 2006) threatens to create new hierarchies in an already segmented labour market in care work (Santamäki 2004; Wrede 2008a). This article focuses on the practical nursing occupation (*lähihoitaja-ammatti*), which is a care occupation within the health and social sector that continues to be predominantly "women's work" with relatively short training and practical orientation. Auxiliary positions in the care sector such as practical nursing have traditionally been working-class occupations. Practical nursing is one of the occupations that policymakers have viewed as well suited for integrating groups such as unemployed or others who are forced to change their occupation (Vuorensyrjä 2006). Specifically, practical nursing is increasingly viewed as an occupation to which it is considered to be not only possible, but desirable to recruit large numbers of workers among recently arrived immigrants. If ethnicity, then, becomes a new ordering hierarchy intersecting with the previously prominent social divisions such as gender and educational hierarchies, a new segmentation of the care work labour market may occur. Current

managerial policies and practices that aim at making practical nursing more flexible are framed by a hierarchical logic that is underpinned by the low ranking of practical nursing in educational as well as sociocultural hierarchies (Wrede 2008b). If the integration of immigrants to the practical nursing labour force follows the well-established hierarchical logics, a segmentation of the care work labour market according to ethnicity is a likely outcome, expressed in the formation of specific enclaves or “dirty work” positions where immigrant care workers are placed rather than being integrated on equal basis with native Finns.

From this perspective, it is of vital importance to understand the currently emerging social and cultural dynamics of ethnic hierarchies in care work. While ethnic hierarchies and labour market enclaves are commonly discussed at the macro level of labour markets (e.g. Forsander 2002, 2007), this article turns to the context of the workplace, approaching workplace-level ethnic hierarchies as a new hierarchical logic in the matrix of social logics ordering the occupation. The workplace is here approached with a focus on the institutional level of working practices, norms, and routines (cf. Kamali 2005:32) that are influenced by the realm of the institution rather than by individual attitudes and acts. We have chosen to bring into focus the practices shaping the distribution of work as a central realm of institutional practice. Our theoretical perspective is based on Richard Hugman’s definition of the concept of *institutional racism*. Hugman (1991) distinguishes between different types of racism in health organizations. He defines institutional racism as a type of racism that differs from overt racism appearing in personal contacts in that it is based not on conscious acts but on institutional practices and structures and is accompanied by blindness to power differences. It also differs from the policy level, at which both individual and institutional racism can be addressed, but which may just as well remain a level of ‘image management’ concealing the existence of racism (Hugman 1991:148–149, 158–159). The institutional approach makes workplace practices, including practices concerning work distribution, an important subject of study. Here the perspective chosen for the empirical study is that of the practical nurses themselves, as their lived experience of workplace practices directly affects the ethos of the workplace (Hughes 1984). We believe that this ethos or the social atmosphere of the workplace has a fundamental impact on the wellbeing of both carers and clients. From this perspective, ethnic hierarchies, like all social and cultural hierarchies that underpin social inequalities among care workers in the workplace, represent an obstacle to quality care. We are aware that directing the focus towards ethnic hierarchies and inequality implies that the possibility of highlighting experiences of tolerance and actual workplace equality is partly ruled out. We do not, however, imply that the perspective of ethnic hierarchies reflects all experiences or the everyday work of all practical nurses with immigrant background.

There is no simple opposition between immigrants and members of the majority population. Immigrants are often mentally arranged in hierarchies depending on which eth-

nic group they belong to (e.g. Jaakkola 2005). These hierarchies are not static, but change over time. The empirical material also suggests that the immigrant informants had different experiences depending on ideas of ethnicity based on visual differences. For example, some informants reported that being dark-skinned or speaking Finnish with an accent brought about negative responses, while greater similarity in external appearance facilitated contacts with the majority population. Ideas about ethnic hierarchies also comprise notions of differences among immigrants as workers (e.g. Gavanas 2006). Due to the small number of immigrant informants in our study we will, however, not be able to elaborate on this kind of ethnic hierarchies.

The article builds on a thematic analysis of qualitative interviews with fifteen informants, of which eleven are ethnic Finns and four have immigrant background. The reason for including a lesser proportion of immigrant informants than of native Finnish informants in the study is that the interviews were originally collected with the aim of studying cultural changes in care work. Interviewees with immigrant background were included to reflect the composition of the workforce in the Helsinki region, but ethnicity was not to be the key focus. Nevertheless, the analysis indicated that the material was worth investigating from the perspective of ethnic hierarchies. Since workplace practices are shaped through interaction, it is an advantage that the material includes also native Finnish informants. Because of the limited number of immigrant informants, as well as the lack of previous research on the integration processes of immigrants to the Finnish care work culture, our study can be described as an explorative study.

### Ethnicity in care organizations

In Finnish research on immigrants and work, the emphasis has often been on largely quantitative analyses of immigrants’ positions in the labour market (e.g. Forsander 2002, 2007; Heikkilä & Pikkarainen 2007). Concerning immigrants’ paths to employment, difficulties in the entrance phase have received attention (e.g. Ahmad 2005; Valtonen 2001). While recent research has highlighted the diversification of Finnish workplaces from the organizational point of view (e.g. Juuti 2005; Sippola & Hammar-Suutari 2006), studies centred on immigrants’ own experiences in their workplaces are considerably fewer, although Marja-Liisa Trux (2000, 2005) pays attention to these. With the exception of a recent anthology (Martikainen & Tiilikainen 2007), the gender aspect on immigrants in working life has also been neglected. To a large extent, the processes of hierarchical inclusion of immigrants in work organizations still constitute an unexplored field of research.

While knowledge of hierarchies on the workplace level is still needed, the tradition of theorizing on ethnic segmentation in the labour market is more established (for an overview, see Forsander 2002:38–43). The position of immigrants in care

organizations has indeed been subject to some investigation (Markkanen & Tammisto 2005), but proper social scientific research on the subject in the Finnish context is still lacking. To the extent that ethnicity in health and social care has been made a research topic, it concerns immigrants in the role of clients (e.g. Järvinen 2004).

In Swedish research, the interest in the issue of ethnicity and care work has been considerably greater, and the research has also drawn attention to relations of subordination and superordination related to ethnicity. Although the Swedish experience is characterized by the country's large number of immigrants, the similarities between the organization of care work in Finland and Sweden still make comparison meaningful. In an early study by Knocke (1986), the labour market inclusion of immigrant women in care work and other low-status jobs is investigated as threefold subordination. Knocke observes that it is not possible to distinguish between subordination owing to immigrant background and subordination that stigmatizes low-status jobs (Knocke 1986:117), but draws on the overall marginalization of immigrant women rather than on the distinguishing of ethnic hierarchies in the workplace. In an investigation of ethnicity in elderly care, Lill (2007), on the other hand, discusses the emergence of ethnic hierarchies in relation to immigrant clients and caregivers. Her discussion of carers with immigrant background is essentially restricted to the impact of language on the work distribution and on the relations between colleagues. She argues that an ethnically defined work distribution, in which immigrant carers are ascribed the position of informal interpreters, may arise because of the need for personnel with language skills. Lill claims that this division can be seen as subordination of care workers with immigrant background, since it creates unequal terms of employment. In the light of these studies, our intention is to turn the analysis to the interplay between ethnicity and a subordinate occupational position, as well as to illuminate the ethnically defined distribution of work from several angles.

## Material and method

The material used in this study consists of 15 thematic, semi-structured interviews collected in the Helsinki region in 2004.<sup>1</sup> The interview themes covered topics such as the choice of occupation, initial experiences of working as a practical nurse, correspondence between education and working life, the practical work, working conditions, and workplace relations, including the issue of being an immigrant or working with immigrant colleagues. The length of the interviews varied between 38 minutes and two hours. Primarily, the interviews were conducted at the research institute, but a few informants were also interviewed at their places of work. Of the informants, all of whom were women aged between 20 and 60, four had immigrant background, while eleven were of ethnic Finnish origin. The real names of the informants are replaced with pseudonymous names; Viire, Samira, Amran and Jamila being the informants of foreign origin, and Arja,

Johanna, Helena, Jaana, Kaarina, Kristiina, Sari, Maria, Päivi, Susanna and Liisa the native Finnish informants.

None of the immigrant informants was recruited directly from abroad. At the time of the interview, the informants had received their degree in practical nursing rather recently. All of them had experience of working as qualified practical nurses in eldercare after receiving their degree, and several also had prior work experience in eldercare. At the time of the interview, six informants worked in homes for the elderly, two in hospitals, and five in home care. Two of the informants were unemployed. The recruitment of informants was conducted partly through contacting a cohort of carers from one school who graduated in 2002, and partly by using the snowball method. This recruitment method made it possible to avoid linkage to a particular workplace, which was preferable because the occupation, rather than the workplace, was the focus of attention. The aim was to study practical nurses working in elderly care, but in diverse settings. The fact that the selection consisted of informants with both immigrant and ethnic Finnish background enabled us to study the inclusion of immigrants from several angles and to compare the accounts of minority and majority members. All interviews were conducted in Finnish or Swedish. This was possible because of the good language skills of the immigrant informants.

There is no certain data about the number of practical nurses with immigrant background working in Finland or in the Helsinki region, but according to figures from 2005, at least 80 persons with another mother tongue than Finnish or Swedish were employed as practical nurses or in corresponding care work positions in institutions belonging under the health centre of the city of Helsinki (Health Centre of Helsinki 2006:31), constituting approximately a few percent of the total workforce. The statistics do not reveal the mother tongue or ethnic background of employees with another mother tongue than Finnish or Swedish. Elderly care takes place at the interface between the health and social care sectors, and it should be noted that some elderly care functions are also administered by the social services department. Nevertheless, the figures indicate that the phenomenon is still in its cradle, which justifies the application of a micro perspective in our study. At the same time, the phenomenon is clearly of topical interest, since the number of immigrant employees is constantly rising. Between 2005 and 2007, the proportion of the City of Helsinki Health Centre workforce with a foreign mother tongue has increased with one third (City of Helsinki Health Centre 2008).

The qualitative method employed in this study is thematic analysis (cf. Eskola and Suoranta 2000), which was carried out in a grounded way at the first stage of the analysis. This implied that we included all statements in which ethnicity in some way was touched upon. A key concept that served as our analytical focus was *ethnic hierarchies* and the concrete situations in which ethnic hierarchies are manifested. As the analysis proceeded, the distribution of tasks emerged as a key theme for the entire analysis. At this stage, we proceeded to analysing the general logics ordering the distribution of tasks,

not just in relation to ethnicity. In the final analysis, we settled for the concept of institutional racism as an appropriate conceptual framework.

The first section of the article introduces our approach to the distribution of work as a field of struggle. We strive to identify how hierarchies concerning the distribution of tasks between practical nurses emerge in workplace practices. The aim of the second section is to examine what makes the creation of such hierarchies possible and why certain procedures may constitute breeding grounds for unequal treatment. The common denominator for the second section is the issue of formal versus informal labour management, that is, the established institutional frames and rules for the work distribution as well as the areas that are left outside the scope of formal management. In the final section we discuss equality as an organizational responsibility and its implications.

### The distribution of tasks as a field of struggle

The aim of the following section is to identify which kind of hierarchies of work distribution the practical nurses with immigrant background are subject to in their work community and how they are interpreted by the practical nurses themselves. The distribution of tasks can be described as a field of struggle in the sense that the distribution is not fixed but open to interpretation and negotiation, as are the explanations of the causes of unequal distribution. It is crucial to note that not only hierarchies based on ethnicity are at work. The ethnic aspects are intertwined and concurrent with other social and cultural hierarchies, in that the position of the practical nurse is already labelled as “dirty work,” women’s work and as a working-class occupation, and thus does not occupy a high status in society.

The Finnish health care system is supported by legislation and education and the distribution of tasks is governed by formal occupational hierarchies (Wrede 2008a). In this hierarchy, practical nurses are primarily considered support workers (Wrede 2008b). The practical nursing occupation was designed to be more flexible than previous corresponding, but more specialized, lower-level care occupations. The work role has, nevertheless, emerged as rather vague and is therefore in practice shaped within the work organization. From the perspective of the practical nurses themselves distrust in their competence is common, implying that their duties are limited to heavy, dirty and unrewarding tasks (Tainio & Wrede 2008; Wrede 2008b). The hierarchical division of labour in combination with the absence of a clearly defined occupational role not only disempowers the occupational group; it is also likely to place the burden of setting boundaries for one’s own work on the individual.

The immigrant practical nurses are subject to the same kind of devaluation as practical nurses in general, but the devaluation in their case sometimes appears to be associated with or accentuated owing to their immigrant background. This interpretation is underpinned by the fact that the devaluation sometimes comes from co-workers within their own occupation. Of our informants, only one of the immigrants reports what she

identifies as unequal treatment in the field of work distribution, whereas two other immigrants reply in the negative when directly asked about inequalities related to the distribution of work. Several of the native Finnish informants, however, comment on ethnically defined differences in the distribution of tasks. The immigrant practical nurse Amran describes how she as a newcomer and an immigrant was treated as an inferior by her fellow workers, who tried to delegate part of their own tasks to her.

*[My co-workers] sent me here, sent me there, and you know, I had my own duties, and my own patients, but they don’t notice it, they look at me like some student. (...) They started to say “will you get that from there,” “will you bring me that patient,” “will you get the diaper from there,” things like that, and I was bound to argue against them because I’ve got my duties that I have to take care of. (...) They didn’t like it, of course, or she didn’t like it – she doesn’t work there anymore – she said “around here, we help each other.” (...) I said “okay, it’s great that you help each other, but I’m going to take care of mine first.” /laughter/ (...) It’s got better, now I know how I’m going to work and (...) which of the common tasks I should take on. (Amran)*

At the time of the interview, however, Amran experienced herself as on a par with her colleagues in relation to the work tasks.

*I have the same tasks as everybody else and maybe I do a little extra too. No, I don’t do more than the others, but I do ... like they do. /laughter/ I mean, there are of course other jobs [to be done] than washing patients and feeding. (...) You have to order diapers, do the laundry, put things in order, things like that. (Amran)*

Amran’s initial experiences point to the existence of a dividing line between nurses who accomplish more valuable tasks and nurses to whom the less valued tasks are delegated. In society in general, and in the hospital setting in particular, dirty work is often delegated downwards in the occupational hierarchy (Hughes 1984: 307; Twigg 2000: 145). Put in other words, Amran’s claim that her duties nowadays exceed the dirty work tasks can be seen as a way of emphasizing that she is no longer at the bottom of the hierarchy.

While Amran succeeded in defending her position, her story underpins the hypothesis that whether one manages to defend one’s position in the work community is largely a question of personal determination. Paralleling this hypothesis, the ethnic Finnish interviewee Arja relates the case of a former co-worker with immigrant background who did not have the personal strength to object to demeaning treatment. This colleague was being used by her co-workers to accomplish tasks that did not even belong to the sphere of the workplace.

*[T]hey traded on this person (...) who didn’t dare to say anything (...) and who wasn’t professionally skilled either but ... they knew she was good at sewing so they started to bring*

*things that needed sewing from their relatives and friends. Then she even had to start mending a wedding dress, but then I said "wait a minute, now!" (...) and then they have to clean the windows and take care of more of the cleaning chores. (Arja)*

Arja states that immigrants seem to do the cleaning to a greater extent than other practical nurses. Although accepting that cleaning and other household chores are often part of the practical nursing work, practical nurses tend to reject interpretations that define such chores as the essence of their work role (Tainio & Wrede 2008).

In explanation of the existence of an ethnically defined work distribution, the informants refer to the actions of personnel representing the majority population and of native Finnish clients, as well as to the actions of immigrant nurses themselves. In line with Arja, who was quoted above, Johanna relates part of the problems with the distribution of work to the work community. Noting that there are differences between organizations in the treatment of immigrants, she claims that the distribution "depends pretty much on the immigrant and on the unit, whether foreigners are in general approved of." Both immigrants and ethnic Finns claim that also the clients contribute to an unequal work distribution, an issue to which we return later on in this article. Furthermore, some of the native Finnish informants attribute the conflicts over the distribution of work to the immigrants' conscious choice and their lack in knowledge rather than to the surrounding work community. Recounting a rumour, Päivi claims that an unequal distribution of tasks is the result of the immigrants' own choice: "Well, I've heard that there are some things they don't do. (...) Is it the Somali women who don't shower men, I'm not sure. (...) In my opinion, if they've come to that school they should [do it], for example in the hospitals everybody does everything." Liisa explains problems in the distribution of work tasks by referring to the immigrants' deficient educational background: "Their education isn't sufficient, they're not able to do the same [things]."

We do not focus here on the ways in which the actors construct differences between themselves and the 'others'. Instead, we look closer upon the institutional practices surrounding the work distribution in order to increase the understanding of what renders it possible to assign low status tasks or tasks that are not at all associated with the workplace to immigrant employees. We contend that the practice of delegating tasks that upholds the occupational hierarchy in care organizations is transferred to and orders the relations between ethnic Finns and immigrants.

### Practices of work distribution

Whereas the purpose of the previous analysis was to answer the question of how hierarchies are expressed in the practices concerning the distribution of tasks, the following section attempts to approach the question of what aspects of labour management render the creation of such hierarchies within an occu-

pation possible. Firstly, we discuss the clients' significance as a factor that influences the distribution of tasks in an unequal direction. Secondly, we explore the frames within which the daily decisions about the distribution of tasks are made. In this context, we also discuss employees' access to in-service training. Thirdly, we investigate the role of workplace orientation for newcomers in shaping the conditions for the organizational relations within which hierarchies may arise. It is worth noting that the last two areas of practice are fields which may not only affect immigrants but also ethnic Finns. An essential issue throughout this section is the relation between formal and informal labour management. It appears that the absence of formal labour management and of a clearly defined work role gives rise to informal labour management. How does formal labour management, as a result of institutional neglect of power differences (cf. Hugman 1991), leave room for a potentially discriminatory informal management to take over?

### Clients as a challenge to workplace equality

An issue commonly addressed by the informants of Finnish origin is in what way clients holding negative attitudes present an obstacle to good relationships between immigrant carers and clients. The resistance among the clients is, in turn, claimed to result in diverging practices in the field of work distribution. We acknowledge the inherent dilemma in the choice between clients' rights and immigrant carers' rights, but at the same time we also strive to question the notion of clients as problematic and prejudiced.

The image of elderly people held by the ethnic Finnish informants appears to be that of a client group which is, on the whole, more prejudiced than other client groups: "Well, if you're working with elderly people, [the cultural background] may be important (...) they still have prejudices. If you're working with children as a practical nurse, I don't think it's that big." (Kaarina) The informants use strong expressions to describe clients' reactions to immigrant carers: the clients are "suspicious," even "horrified" and "shocked," and these reactions appear to be regarded as characteristic of elderly people. Maria categorically states that the elderly "can be really horrible and mean" and that they "fear difference." These statements point to an image of elderly clients as inflexible and of their prejudices as unchangeable. The native Finnish practical nurses picture prejudices held by the clients not only as more difficult to change, but also as more comprehensible and excusable. Susanna's statement illustrates how age becomes an explanation for tolerance (or the absence of tolerance): "A young person has learnt and seen things, and learns to tolerate these things [being cared for by immigrants] faster [than elderly people]." Nevertheless, Kristiina contradicts the image of the inflexible aged in admitting that a situation where a client refused to accept to be cared for by an immigrant carer ultimately got its solution thanks to the practical nurse's own action: "They sorted it out just through talking, the employee had managed to smooth down the situation and finally got inside, and then it (...) was nothing."

The native Finnish interviewees' notion of prejudiced clients as a major obstacle is not unanimously shared by the immigrant informants. Although the immigrants have encountered negatively disposed clients as well, their reports show that the attitudes among the elderly are as differing as those of the professionals. Similarly to the native Finnish nurses, the immigrant nurses seem to regard elderly people's prejudices as more excusable. Viire points out the fact that elderly people frequently are not used to immigrant employees, and that their attitudes change once they have grown accustomed to them: "people get used to everything." While admitting that working with prejudiced clients can be difficult, Amran seeks to explain their behaviour and suggests that it might be due to the fact that they suffer from illness and are in need of the help of other people to manage.

*They [the elderly] have their own ideas and their own prejudices, some of them, and it's really hard to work with them ... when they think I look different. (...) Because they don't know, they only see some black girl (...) they don't know how old I am, and what my life looks like, or (...) maybe they have a tough time suffering from illness and not being able to take care of themselves. (Amran)*

But the immigrant interviewees also speak of positive encounters with clients. Samira states that she has only received positive responses from her clients: "[The elderly] have been awfully nice to me. (...) I've always been so liked, popular with them." Contrary to the conclusions that could be drawn from the statements of some of the native Finnish practical nurses, Amran describes elderly people as more understanding of cultural differences than other Finns: "[The elderly] are sensible. (...) They've lived their lives and they understand better that you can be different. And some have maybe travelled in Africa, for example, and you can talk to them about that."

Why do the native Finnish practical nurses present the clients as a source of discrimination of immigrant carers rather than pointing out discrimination among members of the staff? Is it simply easier to blame someone else or see someone else's faults than one's own? One possible explanation is offered by Katarina Andersson (2007), who argues that home care personnel lay stress on a kind of 'personal chemistry', which they regard as being of great importance in the relationship between carer and client. The elderly, however, stress the carers' competence and own initiative rather than a sense of closeness to the carers (Andersson 2007: 120–121). The elderly client, as portrayed by the interviewed Finns, is similarly said to want personal chemistry and closeness. Maria describes the elderly as in need of security: "maybe they [the elderly] seek security and when there are language problems, then they don't get that feeling of security that they want from the carer," an interpretation which is supported by others claiming that the elderly are suspicious and anxious about people they are not accustomed to. Yet, the testimony of the immigrant carers indicates that this may be too narrow an understanding of the clients' needs.

As several quotations show, it happens that elderly clients refuse to be assisted by immigrant nurses. How this dilemma is solved seems to depend on the policy of each workplace, as well as on the type of institution. The policy principles, however, are not always put into practice on the workplace. Maria mentions a former workplace where clients, despite the rules, were able to choose not to be helped by immigrant carers: "[A certain carer of African origin] didn't get to take care of even half of our clients although you can't choose your carer."

When uniform policies are lacking, and decision-making in this matter is the responsibility of each institution, immigrant carers run the risk of being shut out of assignments that ought to be part of their duties. In the situation mentioned above the clients' opinions became decisive; another informant assumes that the decision lies with the head of the unit, rather than being based on an officially approved policy:

*There are probably some [clients], some who might refuse (...). But after all, they have to get used to it, there are dark-skinned persons in the hospitals and the nursing homes. (...) It's probably also a company-specific thing, if the boss makes them go to everyone. (Päivi)*

When clients dismiss immigrant carers, the position of immigrant employees becomes an organizational dilemma. Home care poses a specific problem, since the service is provided in private homes. Therefore, the ethnic Finnish nurse Susanna argues, the clients should in principle have the right to decide who enters their homes. She fears the clients' reactions when she as a supervisor will be visiting clients in company with practical nursing students of foreign origin:

*One [of the clients] is very strongly of the opinion that no dark-skinned person comes into her home, and I've said that when students [with immigrant background] are starting to come with me (...) what about if I come anyway, I have to come, and then she says no, absolutely not. Then it's a bit harder, what to do with these clients. (...) Basically (...) when they're in their own home, it's they who decide.*

The conflict between workplace equality and clients' rights has no completely satisfactory solution. At the same time as the amount of immigrant carers increases, growing attention is also paid to cultural competence in nursing work. Heikkilä (2004) stresses in her study of elderly Finnish immigrants in Sweden that the clients' sense of security and affinity enhances when they share language and cultural background with the carers. Meeting clients' needs may, however, counteract endeavours to achieve greater equality among employees. Andersson (2007) draws on the conflict between meeting the clients' wishes on one hand and making efforts to achieve a more equal work distribution between male and female carers on the other, a context in which the male carers are rather considered to benefit from the unequal distribution. When it comes to immigrants, the situation is problematic considering that two vulnerable parties are involved (Jönson 2006). According to Jönson's

(2006) findings, Swedish elderly care personnel avoid interpreting elderly people's scepticism of immigrant caregivers as racism, and rather consider it a question of respecting the clients' wishes or of being professional in relation to demented, unhappy, or frightened clients. Jönson considers this a balancing act: it is unfortunate that actual racism is toned down with reference to the clients' poor state of health or dementia, but at the same time clients' legitimate complaints, for example about difficulties in understanding each other's language, should be taken seriously. In addition, we suggest that the notion of clients as a homogeneous group incapable of altering their opinions should be called in question.

### Negotiating the distribution of work

In the following, we focus on the procedures through which the daily distribution of tasks is decided upon. As the analysis has revealed, the absence of formal labour management makes room for informal labour management, out of which a hierarchy regarding the distribution of tasks may arise. We also bring forward the issue of access to the privilege of in-service training, the distribution of which, according to our material, is partly organized on similar grounds as the work tasks.

The practices concerning the distribution of work are diverging. Several of the workplaces employ a system where each of the carers (*omahoitaja*) is responsible for certain clients. The carers are allowed to make their own decisions within the scope of their work with their 'own' clients, whereas when a carer is not present, the distribution of his or her tasks is open to negotiation. Amran explains it as follows: "No one decides, you decide about your own [clients]. I can say 'I'll take this one and that one,' my three [clients], of course someone else can't take them when I'm at work (...) but when I'm away they can share them as they want to." In other workplaces, the system relies on recurrent reorganization of the distribution of tasks, sometimes with the aim of achieving the greatest possible equality through circulating tasks and clients:

*In this work you can't think in terms of popular and non-popular [tasks] ... Since you can't choose them. (...) When the weekly agenda is planned we always circulate the clients so that the same person doesn't visit the same client next week, but another does, and ... so that one won't get too difficult tasks and another easy tasks (...) you have to see to it that it's balanced. /laughter/ (Viire)*

Provided that the purpose is actually an even distribution, and that all of the carers participate in the negotiations and decision-making on equal terms, the risk of inequalities is smaller when the fixed clients system or the circulation system is applied. Negotiation situations, however, open up for power differences to become important and are dependent on individual commitment to equality and awareness of equality issues. An example of this is Jamila's workplace, which has no routine policy of how to decide on the division of tasks. Instead, the division relies on individual pref-

erences of working in pairs or alone. This leaves room for the employees to choose not to work together with certain co-workers.

*[How tasks are divided] depends on what kind of workplaces or co-workers there are. Some like for example working together in pairs and some like working alone, so you ask before [you start working] 'which room do you want to take' or 'which patient do you want to look after,' 'do you want to work in pairs or alone' and then you agree on something (...). You have to ask first, or 'I thought of taking this room, is it okay' (...), 'yes, you can take it.' (Jamila)*

The privilege of access to in-service training is another area in which care organizations employ varying rules. In-service training has a linkage to the care hierarchy and its emphasis on education and expertise, in which also professional development through further education plays a part (Eriksson-Piela 2003: 146–147). As well as formal education, in-service training in order to develop one's competence may also serve as a basis for a hierarchic distribution of tasks. In our material, however, practices concerning access to in-service training seem to be less problematic than those concerning work distribution. In most cases employees are offered equal opportunities of attending: either in-service training is open for those who want to attend, or the employees take turns in attending in-service training. Yet, policies regarding in-service training may prevent others than permanent staff from participating. Sari mentions this limitation: "Apparently I got a permanent job now, and then it's possible [to get in-service training] (...) but for substitutes there isn't (...) in-service training." Since the Finnish health care system relies heavily on substitute workers, excluding substitutes from in-service training possibilities could be a significant dividing mechanism with discriminatory side effects for immigrants as well as for ethnic Finns. Temporary appointments have become a permanent feature in Finnish health care, with as much as one fourth of the workforce in health and social care made up of staff on fixed-term contracts (Wrede 2008a).

### Workplace orientation

An inconvenience that several interviewees draw attention to is the shortcomings, and even entire lack, of workplace information and orientation offered to new employees. A survey conducted by *Tehy*, the Union of Health and Social Care Professionals, supports the assumption that workplace education related to immigrants as employees, co-workers, and patients or clients in health care is fairly uncommon (Markkanen & Tammisto 2005). Workplace orientation and information are crucial for both immigrants and native Finns, bearing in mind that the practical nursing occupation is mainly shaped at the workplace, and that lack of information enhances the risk of an informal labour management to emerge. Workplace orientation is also a prerequisite considering the ability to admit immigrants who are trained abroad and who are not familiar

with the Finnish health care system and Finnish working life practices into the workforce.

Amran describes how she had to find out things in the course of time as both the head nurse and her own fellow workers left her without information about the organization and the practical work. Telling this in response to a question about whether she as a foreigner is treated in the same way as the other practical nurses, she seems to interpret the treatment she receives by the head nurse as linked to the fact that she is an immigrant.

*That head nurse (...) didn't give me any information when I first got there, and then I didn't know anything about the ward system and how it works and things like that. Then, when two months had passed, she asked me how things are going, and I just said what I think, 'you should tell me how this system works,' I didn't know anything. 'But you have to ask,' she said, and I thought it was a bit stupid (...) I don't know what to ask when I don't know anything about the ward. (...) I had to learn in the course of time, you know. (...) I didn't know that practical nurses aren't allowed to give insulin injections on that ward ... and I did it, it was such things. But I should know it, they should have told me. (Amran)*

From the clients' point of view, well-informed nurses to whom they are properly introduced inspire trust. One of the native Finnish informants, Johanna, recalls the experience of having to shoulder the responsibility of being the only practical nurse on a ward without even being introduced to the clients beforehand.

*The nursing aide had been on that ward and knew the residents but wasn't allowed to administer medicines. (...) Then again, as a practical nurse you have the authority, and I hadn't seen, maybe I'd seen those residents in passing /laughter/, but when it comes to knowing who's who, it felt like 'hey, it shouldn't be like this.' (...) It would've been a little easier [if I'd had time to acquaint myself with them], I didn't even know which ones eat by themselves, whom do you have to feed, then you're on the evening shift, well ... 'what kind of diapers do you put on this one?,' 'when does this one go to sleep?,' 'who is this?,' 'what does this one eat?' /laughter/ (Johanna)*

Johanna's story is an example of how the shortcomings regarding work guidance also affect native Finnish carers. Shortage of staff was the reason why Kaarina was left without workplace orientation as a newcomer. Although Kaarina happened to be informed of her right to guidance, the fact that she knew about it was neither self-evident nor did it guarantee that she received the guidance she was entitled to. She recalls that in a previous workplace she was told that "you have the right to work guidance, go ahead and demand it (...) but in practice there were no resources for it anyway, and they had their hands full with their students and ... with their own job."

In some organizations, guidance is provided but seems to happen at random. Johanna states that at one of her former

workplaces, providing guidance was everybody's responsibility. At another workplace only one employee was assigned the duty of introducing her to the work. When the overall responsibility does not belong to anybody in particular, the result is a high degree of discrepancy in the information conveyed, as well as a risk for the newcomer of missing important information. Johanna had to decide for herself whom to believe:

*[E]verybody introduced me, [but] when everybody does it in a slightly different way /laughter/ it's a bit like 'Whom should you actually believe?' But then, in the home care unit, there was one particular person who took me along, and who trusted me enough to let me go to a familiar client alone on the first or second day. 'You go heating up food on your own, you'll be fine. Call me if there's a problem.' (Johanna)*

The absence of induction training not merely characterizes low-status jobs, but also highly educated immigrant employees have encountered what seems to be a feature of Finnish working life that affects immigrants and natives alike (Silfver 2008). In a Finnish study, Teija Larsson and her colleagues (2003) stress the importance of guidance but argue that companies often expect integration to happen fast and new employees to be able to start working directly. Especially smaller enterprises cannot afford providing training for new employees (Larsson et al. 2003: 79). However, a recent project involving several Finnish work organizations has addressed the importance of workplace orientation for immigrants and has also given rise to research on support of the socialization process of ethnic minority members on the workplace (Parkas 2007). In our material, lacking or deficient guidance seems to be both a question of poor organization and of scarce resources. The claim for giving priority to workplace guidance should be justified not only in the name of ethnic equality, but also for the purpose of promoting the interest for the occupation and of raising the quality of the care provided.

### Workplace equality: an organizational responsibility

As the previous analysis has shown, the inclusion of immigrants into a work organization implies a need for looking over the management of labour in order to avoid the persistence of institutional racism. Our research is in line with the emphasis in current research on the need for the organization itself to change. The question of how an increasingly diverse workforce should be approached in terms of management is a topical issue in management and organization studies (e.g. Lorbiecki 2001). Researchers who would like to see change on an organizational level stress that anti-discrimination legislation is not enough (Wrench 1999: 230); neither will interventions focusing on individuals suffice without changes in organizational practices and structures or commitment to promoting equality among the leaders (Sippola 2007: 88). In order to oppose discrimination at an organizational level, Wrench (1999: 230–231) advocates the implementation of

equal opportunity policies that cover both the transformation of organizational practices and the reduction of discrimination and prejudices among the employees.

In spite of the attention that the issue has received at a theoretical level, both Finnish and European researchers call attention to the prevalent indifference on the organizational level. While Wrench (1999) states that anti-discrimination measures still frequently meet resistance at an organizational level in many European countries, Sippola's (2007) study indicates that the promotion of multiculturalism in Finnish organizations, with a few exceptions, mainly focuses on individual attitude changes among the majority members. Changes in behaviour as well as changes at the organizational level are much more seldom the target (Sippola 2007: 78–79). Juuti's (2005) report shows how Finnish employers are of the opinion that foreign employees ought to adapt to Finnish working culture as such and that demands and treatment should be the same for everybody, rather than being prepared to compromise when taking in employers with a different cultural background. The principle of sameness, however, has been criticized since it implies adaptation to an ethnocentric organizational form, in comparison with which people who are different are regarded as problematic (Lorbiecki 2001: 351). Thus, the expectation of adaption can be seen as an expression of institutional racism (Hugman 1991: 149).

The hesitant attitude towards allowing for difference at a practical level and compromising when employing personnel with another cultural background is also present in our material. This is demonstrated by the negotiations on the boundaries between work and private life that the immigrant interviewee Amran has entered into with her employers and colleagues. In Amran's case, different notions of work and family responsibilities collide:

*Finland, or the Finnish culture, or at least those with whom I've been working, had a very hard time when I sometimes was late, or when I phoned to tell them that unfortunately I can't come today, because I have to help my mum since she doesn't know the language, so I have to interpret for her, and I can't tell mum 'mum, I'm afraid I'm working tomorrow,' even though she lets me know today. (...) Mum is still more important to me than work, but they don't understand, or they didn't understand it where I worked [before], but now when I've started [working] on this ward I haven't noticed anything. If I call and say that I'm afraid I can't come, it's quite okay. (Amran)*

Amran also mentions how her religion affected her chances of getting a job when she applied for jobs as a newly-qualified practical nurse. Having informed themselves of her exercise of religion in connection with the job interview, the employers were able to reject her application in order to avoid having to deal with difference.

*There were jobs, but if you're a foreigner, if you wear a cloth on your head, then it's not easy, no, no. It's hard. They ask lots of question beforehand. (...) Sometimes it's Ramadan (...) then*

*I have to fast, and when I fast I have to eat at certain times and sometimes it's the same time as the patients (...) and you're not allowed to eat when the patients are eating, first you have to feed the patients. Then I have to say beforehand when I'm going to eat, because I haven't eaten all day, and when I'm going to pray, and it takes 5 to 10 minutes to pray, then some head nurses say no thanks. (Amran)*

Asking questions about the religious practices of an applicant enables employers to sort out immigrants in advance if they fear that they will make inconvenient claims. This implies that it is immigrant applicants, and not the Finnish organization, who will have to do the compromising.

Such a proceeding seems to conflict with the spirit of anti-discrimination law as expressed, for instance, in the Non-Discrimination Act (21/2004). The principle of anti-discrimination is also recognized in the City of Helsinki Health Centre guidelines on the rights of employees (2002). The guidelines prescribe that the work community should strive to ensure employees' right to prayer breaks, and permit the use of headscarves provided by the employer (Lehtinen 2007). However, Lehtinen (2007) points out that the guidelines reflect the notion that the problem lies with the individual employees and not with the labour management, and that there is also reason to believe that these guidelines are not commonly known in the workplaces.

Accepting employees with a different cultural background into a work organization implies actual consequences that have concrete manifestations which cannot simply be neglected but need to be managed in one way or the other. According to Wrench (1999: 230), measures to allow for cultural and religious difference should be understood as part of an organizational policy to achieve equal opportunities in the workplace.

## Conclusions and discussion

In this article, we have explored how ethnic hierarchies emerge as a new hierarchical logic in care organizations alongside gender and educational hierarchies, shaping the experiences of the practical nurses. The inherent vagueness of the practical nursing occupation exposes immigrants to arbitrariness in that it places a greater responsibility on the individual workplace and leaves room for unequal treatment. The hierarchical way of thinking about occupational relations has a strong foothold in care organizations, and the subordination of immigrants may be seen as an extension of this logic. The deficits in the management of labour, which are mediated through practices of work distribution, affect both native Finnish and immigrant carers, but in the case of the immigrant carers, ethnicity is yet another subordinating factor.

We have maintained that ethnic hierarchies emerging in unequal practices and logics around the distribution of work are expressions of institutional racism, linking institutional racism to the interplay between formal and informal labour management. It can also be seen in the employers' lacking

capability of acknowledging the need for change in the organization due to the increasing number of immigrant employees. While our understanding of institutional racism implies that this kind of racism does not rest on conscious acts but on blindness to power differences (Hugman 1991), some researchers have used the concept of institutional racism to designate intentional discrimination that is expressed in institutional practices (e.g. Pincus 1996). One option is to follow Kamali's (2005: 32) suggestion and leave aside the issue of intentionality. In our understanding, institutional racism expressed as neglect of differences in power has a connection with personal, intentional racism in the sense that neglect of the need for organization-level changes makes room for personal racism to be manifested. We have therefore directed attention to the importance of revising labour management practices concerning the workplace orientation as well as the distribution of tasks and privileges. The analysis shows that there are obvious deficits in the current care work management in these areas that have to be addressed on an organizational level. Our purpose is not to single out these methods as the most important parts of a strategy towards equality, but rather to specify some of the needs for further equality work in care organizations. Apart from the need for organizational change, the issue of immigrant carers' relations to the clients is a question that is worth discussing. For example, while efforts have been made to develop training aimed at preparing health care personnel who are in contact with minorities as clients and co-workers (e.g. JOINehv a; JOINehv b), native Finnish clients constitute an overlooked target group, which also seems to be in need of preparation for meeting carers with immigrant background.

Since the number of immigrants in caring work in Finland is still low, what we are witnessing now is only the early diversification of the Finnish health care workforce, and it is yet to be seen what path it will take. The importance of our findings lies in the possibilities of steering those developments at an early stage through management strategies on the workplace level. Research from other countries has proved that conscious work is needed, since it is not just a question of the majority population getting accustomed to immigrants.

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## Notes

- 1 The interviews were conducted by Malin Grönholm, Laura Tainio, and Sirpa Wrede in spring 2004 within the scope of the project *The New Dynamics of Professionalism within Caring Occupations* and in collaboration with Lea Henriksson's project *The Politics of Recruitment*.

Pirkko Pitkänen

## Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Public Sector Work in Finland

### Abstract

This article is based on a nation-wide postal questionnaire survey eliciting the experiences and views of Finnish authorities in their work with immigrant clients and colleagues, and their attitudes towards cultural diversity and immigration in general. Whereas Finland has traditionally been characterized as a relatively homogeneous country, ethnoculturally, today Finnish society is becoming increasingly international and culturally diverse. This has changed the working contexts of Finnish authorities. Eight groups of authorities were included in the study: border guards, police officers, judicial authorities, employment agency personnel, teachers, social workers, physicians, and nurses (n=3,223). It was discovered that the attitudes of authorities towards immigration were mainly positive, but rather selective. The most desirable immigrants were those who bring economic benefit or intellectual capital into the country, such as tourists, foreign students and highly qualified professionals, preferably from Western countries. Experiences of work with immigrant clients and colleagues were mainly positive, but persons of foreign origin were still perceived as difficult clients. The difficulties culminated in intercultural interaction and communication issues, and in problems related to organisational aspects.

### Introduction

The working contexts of Finnish authorities are in a state of change. Whereas Finland has traditionally been characterized as a relatively homogeneous country where Finnishness has been incontrovertible and taken for granted, today, Finnish society is becoming increasingly international and culturally diverse (Alasuutari and Ruuska 1999; Anttonen 1998; Harinen, Pitkänen, Sagne and Ronkainen 2007; Lepola 2000). While the number of foreign citizens living in Finland was 10,000 in the middle of the 1970s, by the end of 2007 it was 132, 708, and there were some 200,000 people of foreign origin living in the country (Population Register Centre 2007). This article presents the main findings of a nation-wide survey, *Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in the Public Sector Work* (Pitkänen 2006),<sup>1</sup> focusing on the experiences and attitudes of Finnish authorities towards the increase in ethnic and cultural diversity both in their work and in Finnish society. The findings are compared with a cor-

responding survey conducted at the end of 1990s (Pitkänen and Kouki 1999; 2002).

I first discuss the Finnish context regarding immigration and briefly introduce recent policy documents relevant to the topic. Actual issues of concern in Finland are changes in political goals, e.g., a switch from a restrictive immigration policy towards the active recruitment of foreign labour. This is due to a predicted shortage of labour: it is expected that by the end of this decade, insufficient work force will be a real problem in Finland as the baby boomer generations born after World War II reach the age of retirement (Forsander 2002; Forsander, Raunio, Salmenhaara and Helander 2004). A further concern is how the public sector authorities could support the integration of newcomers into Finnish society as equal and active participants. After explaining the research procedure and presenting the main results of the study, I will discuss some key questions that should be taken into consideration when authorities in public administration attempt to tackle the challenges arising in their increasingly diverse working contexts.

## Context of the study

One of the current challenges for policymakers and public authorities is the increase in the international mobility of people. Although migration over national borders has always existed it has not pervaded such a critical mass and attained such everyday complexity as it has today. In today's increasingly borderless world, an unprecedented number of individuals and households are on the move: roughly a billion people traverse nation-state borders annually. An estimated 200 million men, women and children – including skilled professionals, contract workers, students, officially recognized and *de facto* refugees, victims of human trafficking and undocumented residents – currently live outside their country of origin. With the dismantling of formal barriers to labour mobility within the European Union, millions of Europeans currently work and reside in a Member State other than their own (Koehn 2006: 22).

The ready availability of air transport, long-distance telephone, facsimile communication, Internet, and electronic mail has made this possible: travel and communications across national borders have become rapid and easy. The political integration of the European Union and the collapse of the Soviet Union are the two major forces influencing international mobility above and beyond technological changes and the globalization pressures in the realm of economics. Whereas past migrants settled in the countries of reception, in this 'new age of migration' (Castles and Miller 1998) they often retain significant, continuing and intense political, economic, social and cultural ties and linkages to their countries of origin. Today, most nation-states contain border-crossing migrants, some long-term residents, others recent arrivals, who have a multiple orientation: to the country of residence and to another place with which they maintain political, economic, familial, religious and/or linguistic ties, and which may be conceived of as 'home'. That orientation may be dual, or even triple in that populations from 'home' may be spread across several countries or continents (Grillo 2001: 10; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 217, 223; Rogers 2002: 8).

The case of Finland is unique compared with many other European countries. Until the 1980s Finland was almost untouched by the immigration that was taking place in many other Western industrial societies (Paananen 1999: 46). On the contrary, Finland was a country of emigration. For instance, when other Western European countries from the 1950s to the 1970s attracted millions of labour migrants to their factories and later on into the service sector, over a half a million Finns were emigrating away to Sweden and to more distant countries. Finnish migration policy has also been ethnoculturally protectionist. Entering the country and gaining a residence permit has been restricted and coming to Finland has required almost a biological bond to Finnishness, or marrying a Finn. The reasons for this were mainly geopolitical: the position at the interface between the East and the West (Forsander et al. 2004; Paananen 1999; Ronkainen, Pitkänen and Harinen 2007: 91).

Although Finland has traditionally been a country of emigration, during the 1990s the relative number of foreign residents increased in Finland more rapidly than in any other Western European state. Although today foreign citizens constitute only 2–3 per cent of the total population of Finland, ethnic and cultural diversity has developed into an increasingly visible phenomenon in day-to-day living and working environments.

The residents with foreign backgrounds form a very heterogeneous group – there is diversity not only in the countries of origin, but also in the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the newcomers and in their reasons for coming to Finland. The largest group of foreign arrivals residing permanently in Finland consists of those coming from the former Soviet Union, especially Russia (26,200) and Estonia (20,000). Over a half of them are Ingrian Finns, who enjoy the status of returnee migrants. According to the Finnish Aliens Act (1991/378), the Ingrians have the right to obtain a permanent residence permit in Finland. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, around 30,000 Ingrians have immigrated to Finland; most of them are descendants of Finnish people who were incorporated into the Soviet Union at the end of World War II when the USSR annexed part of Finland's eastern territory. The next largest groups of immigrants have come to Finland from Sweden (8,400), Somalia (4,800), China (3,900), Thailand (3,500), Germany (3,300), Turkey (3,200), the UK (3,200) and Iraq (3,000) (Population Register Centre 2007). Among the foreign newcomers there are both highly educated professionals in various fields and those who are completely illiterate. The most common reasons for moving to Finland are family ties: more than half of the immigrants move into the country because of familial relations, about one fourth are refugees or asylum seekers, and labour migrants account for about a tenth of the total number of immigrants.

Not just the number of immigrants but also Finnish immigration policy is in a state of change. In the new *Immigration Policy Programme*, effective since October 2006, the goals of labour market policy are for the first time consonant with views supporting migration for humanitarian reasons. In the background there is a concern about the distortion of the age structure and the diminishing of the workforce. As the Finnish population ages, there has been a demand for governmental measures to recruit foreigners who can meet the needs of economic development. In the current integration policy of Finland, the objective is for immigrants to gain an active and full membership of society. It is considered a precondition for the development of a multicultural society that policymakers and public authorities have a strong dedication to the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunity and ethnic equality (Forsander 2002; Forsander et al. 2004; Immigration Policy Programme 2006).

Previously, integration was interpreted in Finland as a phenomenon akin to cultural assimilation: the objective was to adapt the immigrants to the Finnish way of life. From the perspective of the work of the authorities an assimilationist attitude means that there are parallels in service delivery for all clients and that preferential treatment or supportive actions are

unacceptable under the pressures of cultural diversity (Hautaniemi 2001: 29). Since 1997, the general character of Finnish integration policy can be characterized as pluralistic. This means that the authorities have the duty to pursue the realisation of equal opportunities and to promote ethnic equality in their work. The objective is that while foreign migrants dynamically participate in Finnish social activity they also feel connected to their own ethnic groups – without feeling a sense of contradiction (Government Programme on Immigration and Refugee Policy 1997; Immigration Policy Programme 2006).

Among foreign migrants, even in the case of permanent settlement abroad, old ties to the country of origin may be maintained or new ones established – both in the country of origin and in the country of immigration. An increasing trend is that migrants and the overseas communities are engaging in the political, social and economic issues of their country of origin. Thus, migration gives rise to a cyclical exchange between the emigration and immigration countries including not only migrants but also material goods, information, symbols and cultural practices (Faist 2000: 9–10). Around the world, the proliferation of people's border-crossing activities has given rise to an increasing interest in multiple state membership; and, throughout the world, an evolving tendency is towards facilitating the attainment of dual citizenship (Faist 2000: 980–984; Held et al. 1999: 9; Kalekin-Fishman and Pitkänen 2007; Pitkänen and Kalekin-Fishman 2007; Vertovec 2004). Likewise, Finnish citizenship policy has changed: a new *Nationality Act*, adopted in 2003, allows dual/multiple citizenship more widely than did the former *Nationality Act* (1984/584).<sup>2</sup> According to the new law a foreigner who acquires Finnish citizenship is no longer required to renounce his/her previous citizenship, nor will a Finn who acquires a foreign nationality lose his/her Finnish nationality. This new situation widens the sphere of Finnishness, but it also imposes new kinds of demands on the work of public sector authorities (Harinen et al. 2007: 121–144).

Finally, from the perspective of multiethnic administrative work, the *Non-Discrimination Act*, effective since February 2004, is topical. The law forbids discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, belief, opinion, age, health, disability or sexual orientation. The Act is not only applied to recruitment and working conditions, but also to career advancement, training, conditions for access to self-employment and other means of livelihood. As for ethnic discrimination, the Act is applicable in social welfare and health care services: no-one is to be placed in an unequal position by reason of ethnic origin in the distribution of social welfare and health care services, social security benefits, or other forms of support and other rebates or advantages which are granted on social grounds. The *Non-Discrimination Act* obliges all government and municipal authorities to draw up an *Equality Plan* to promote ethnic equality in their activities (*Non-Discrimination Act* 2004/21).

The *Non-Discrimination Act* aims at the eradication of *structural* discrimination; in addition to direct discrimination it also prohibits indirect discrimination. An apparently neutral practice may put a person at a particular disadvantage com-

pared with other persons, unless the provision, criterion or practice has an acceptable aim.<sup>3</sup> In the background there are international agreements concerning the rights of foreign residents by which the Finnish government is obliged to abide. The public authorities are obligated, for example, by the agreement made by all the Member States of the European Union to commit to fostering equality and to opposing all manner of discrimination. The *Racial Equality Directive* (2000/43/EC) and the *Employment Equality Directive* (2000/78/EC) came into operation in 2000 to ensure equal treatment. In Finland these came into force on 1 February 2004 in the form of the *Non-Discrimination Act* (2004/21).

According to the policy documents presented, the Finnish authorities have a duty to actively foster ethnic equality. This is a remarkable change in public sector work, as even before the enactment of the above-mentioned documents, the authorities had the duty to promote equality and egalitarianism. Even the Finnish Constitution contains a clause on equality. According to Section 6 in the Finnish Constitution everyone is equal before the law: no-one is to be placed in an unequal position, for example on the basis of origin, language or religion, without an acceptable reason. It is important for the sake of minority rights that Section 17 of the Constitution has been added with the rights of minorities to maintain their own language and culture.<sup>4</sup> The Constitution is upheld by the restrictions against discrimination in several acts and by decrees obliging the authorities to ensure equal treatment. Still, the current policies mean many new challenges for the work of the Finnish authorities. They also oblige the authorities to critically scrutinise their own practices. Are they discriminative, or can they be *experienced* as such?

## Data and methods

The stance of public sector employees is of crucial importance in adopting the goals presented in the policy documents. The authorities are important agents in the various phases of the immigration and integration processes, both when people move into the country and when they settle into a new life. The present study focused on the experiences and attitudes of Finnish authorities implementing immigration and integration policies in their work: border guards, police officers, judicial authorities (judges, prosecutors, attorneys), employment agency personnel, teachers (primary, secondary and upper secondary schools, vocational training institutions), social workers, physicians and nurses. The aim was to learn about their experiences and views on their work with immigrant clients and colleagues, and their attitudes towards immigrants and immigration in general.

The study was conducted in 2005–2006. Altogether 5,574 members of different professional groups were systematically sampled, so that the size of samples of each group was about 600. The research data were gathered in a nation-wide postal questionnaire survey during the spring of 2005. The questionnaire consisted of structured questions with possible response

alternatives, statements of attitude and open ended questions. In addition to personal information, the number of encounters with immigrant colleagues and clients was ascertained. As there are two official languages in Finland – Finnish and Swedish – the questionnaire was bilingual.

The questionnaire was returned by 3,223 respondents, 64 per cent of those to whom it had been sent. When the non-respondents were analysed, it was found that the populations represented by those who had responded did not differ from the samples. More than half (56 per cent) of the respondents were women. The average age was 44 years and they had worked in their occupation, on average, for 15 years. Of the respondents 98 per cent were Finnish citizens.

To describe the findings, we used tables, figures and descriptive statistics such as percentages and medians. The relationships between qualitative variables, for example occupational groups and statements of attitude, were investigated using  $\chi^2$  test. The extensive information in the attitudinal statements was converted into more concise scales with the help of factor analysis. The internal consistency of the scales was measured by Cronbach's alpha and the differences between occupational groups were tested by the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance. The Kruskal-Wallis test was also used to test the connections between co-variables and scales by each occupational group. The answers obtained from the open-ended questions were analysed by qualitative content analysis.

The overall character of this survey was descriptive; the aim was to describe the experiences and views of representatives of the above-mentioned occupational groups in relation to ethnic and cultural diversity in their work and in Finnish society. In addition, we aimed to identify possible changes in authorities' attitudes and interaction experiences. For that purpose, we compared the results with the survey conducted in 1998–1999 (Pitkänen and Kouki 1999; 2002) in which five groups of authorities were included: police-officers, border guards, social workers, employment agency personnel and teachers.

### Authorities' views on immigration

The research findings suggest that the Finnish authorities' attitudes towards immigration were more favourable in 2005 than they were at the end of the 1990s, when the previous attitude survey among authorities was carried out (Pitkänen and Kouki 1999). Nonetheless, it was discovered that the idea of an *active* immigration policy was not clearly supported by the authorities. Only one third of the respondents thought that there was a need for active recruitment of foreign labour in Finland. A concern about the relatively high unemployment rate among Finns was offered as a reason for restricting immigration, or to support targeted recruitment in fields suffering from a shortage of labour. Some of the respondents were ready to open the doors to highly qualified professionals only:

*It depends on the type of immigration: Finland ought to be more selfish, we cannot receive people with no reading or*

*writing skills. 'Yes' to educated people for employment needs.* (A judicial authority)

*There should be close scrutiny of who is admitted. For example, well-educated European professionals, no freeloaders without any schooling.* (A vocational teacher)

*Immigration should be strictly controlled because the immigrants really have to prove their willingness to work and study.* (A judicial authority)

The most positive attitudes were expressed towards immigrants coming from Western Europe and particularly from the Nordic countries, while the least desirable newcomers were Africans, Middle Easterners and Russians. Attitudes towards Ingrians were more positive than towards Russians. As can be seen in Table 1, the most desirable foreigners were those who bring economic benefit or intellectual capital into the country, such as tourists, foreign students and highly qualified professionals, preferably from Western countries. People moving for family reasons and those genuinely in need of protection were also welcome, but attitudes towards the migration of asylum seekers from the new EU countries were notably disparate. About half of the respondents favoured more foreign adopted children in the country.

The majority of authorities supported efforts towards common settlement policies within EU Member States. Positive attitudes were expressed particularly often by judicial authorities, while less than forty per cent of teachers and physicians reported support for drawing up a common European settlement policy. Border guards were concerned about the security of Finnish national borders: four out of five border guards believed that due to the increase in EU co-operation undesirable migrants who were previously stopped at the border could now enter the country. The authorities' attitudes were related to their occupations: those authorities responsible for national security, border guards and police officers, most often supported the idea of a closed immigration policy. They usually justified their conceptions by the security risks caused by increasing immigration. On the other hand, a more open immigration policy was supported by social workers, judicial authorities and physicians. However, none of the officials supported a totally 'open door' policy.

An attitudinal orientation is tested when put into practice, especially when the intercultural contacts are regular and continuous. This is the case, for instance, in multicultural housing. This survey showed that almost all authorities were quite positive – or at least neutral – in their views of neighbours with immigrant backgrounds, though the border guards and police officers were more circumspect than the others. The attitudes of judicial authorities and nurses were also rather reserved when considering foreign newcomers as potential neighbours. Moreover, the idea of a close relative marrying a foreign resident raised suspicions in all groups, even though in this respect the attitudes of employment officials, teachers and social workers were most positive (Pitkänen 2006: 67–72).

Table 1. Attitudes towards immigration of representatives of different foreign groups. Percentages of those authorities wishing for a few or many more foreign arrivals.

	Border guards	Police officers	Judicial authorities	Employment authorities	Teachers (primary ed)	Teaches (vocational ed)	Social workers	Doctors	Nurses
Tourists	71	79	80	84	85	82	80	75	79
Language teachers	55	60	70	65	62	69	63	70	61
Foreign adopted children	37	46	49	61	60	56	64	55	65
University scholars	35	44	63	58	57	62	53	66	49
Trainees	32	37	60	52	59	64	56	62	48
Foreign workers	28	41	57	55	48	50	53	58	34
Foreign students	29	34	49	50	51	54	50	54	44
Refugees	21	18	43	38	50	40	46	40	33
Asylum seekers (political, ethnic or religious reasons)	17	17	47	37	49	39	49	40	32
IT experts	28	31	49	37	40	39	31	47	28
Workers from new EU countries	23	24	44	36	34	39	36	42	23
Athletes	21	26	29	29	31	34	28	30	24
Foreigners with family members in Finland	11	15	32	26	35	35	34	36	27
Restauranteurs	15	15	32	25	33	35	29	40	22
Asylum seekers from new EU countries	2	5	15	13	20	18	19	16	12

### Authorities' views on integration

The task of migration policy is not just to control the immigration of foreigners but also to settle arrivals legally entering the country. Thus, a distinction needs to be made between policy aimed at the management and regulation of immigration itself (immigration policy) and policy addressing the changes in society that result from immigration (integration policy). The aim of the current integration policy in Finland is to actively integrate newcomers into their new host society, and at the same time, to allow them to maintain and develop their own cultural characteristics. The research findings imply that authorities' attitudes towards these pluralistic aims were more positive in 2005 than in the late 1990s. When the perspectives of Finnish authorities were studied seven years earlier, there were evidently many assimilationist tendencies in their opinions, but today the clear majority of Finnish officials seem to favour pluralistic goals. Nevertheless, a clear contradiction was discovered between theory and practice: while, theoretically, the authorities supported efforts towards cultural pluralism, most markedly the social workers, the policy underlying their practical work was still rather assimilative (Pitkänen and Kouki 1999: 40–49; Pitkänen 2006: 63–72).

Obvious ambivalence was also discovered in authorities' attitudes towards ethnic equality, both in Finnish society and in their work. While the authorities in principle supported the pursuit of active and full membership of society for those moving to Finland from abroad, they would simultaneously prefer to see immigrants in service occupations with low salaries and little social prestige, in jobs such as cleaning, supermarket cashiers, waiters and taxidriviers (Pitkänen 2006: 66–72). These research results concur with earlier studies conducted in Finland. Magdalena Jaakkola's survey of the Finnish population as a whole reports similar results: Finns would prefer to see immigrants in such 'typical immigrant jobs' as cleaning personnel or taxidriviers (Jaakkola 2005: 42, 126). In order to obtain employment that corresponds to their education and previous work experience immigrants need to acquire working experience in Finland. According to Paananen (1999), Forsander and Alitolppa-Niitamo (2000), Forsander (2002), Pitkänen and Atjonen (2003), and Pitkänen (2005a), the market-value of work experience and education acquired abroad is rather low in Finland. Thus, training jobs and other 'entry jobs' are very important first steps in the careers of foreign arrivals. In practice, however, there is a high risk that these 'entry jobs' will become permanent.

## Experiences of work with immigrants

Today, ethnic and cultural diversity have become a part of the daily work of the Finnish public sector authorities. Only a small percentage of the respondents stated that they had nothing to do with people of foreign background in their work. The health care workers had most often personal experiences of colleagues of foreign origin, whereas among other groups they were quite rare. Accordingly, the range of respondents' experiences of multiethnic work largely consisted of contacts with immigrant *clients*. Their experiences were mainly positive: only a small percentage, particularly police officers and border guards, reported negative ones.<sup>5</sup> Still, compared to the situation at the end of 1990s, their experiences were now more positive than before (Pitkänen 2006: 96–99; Pitkänen and Kouki 1999: 105; 2002).

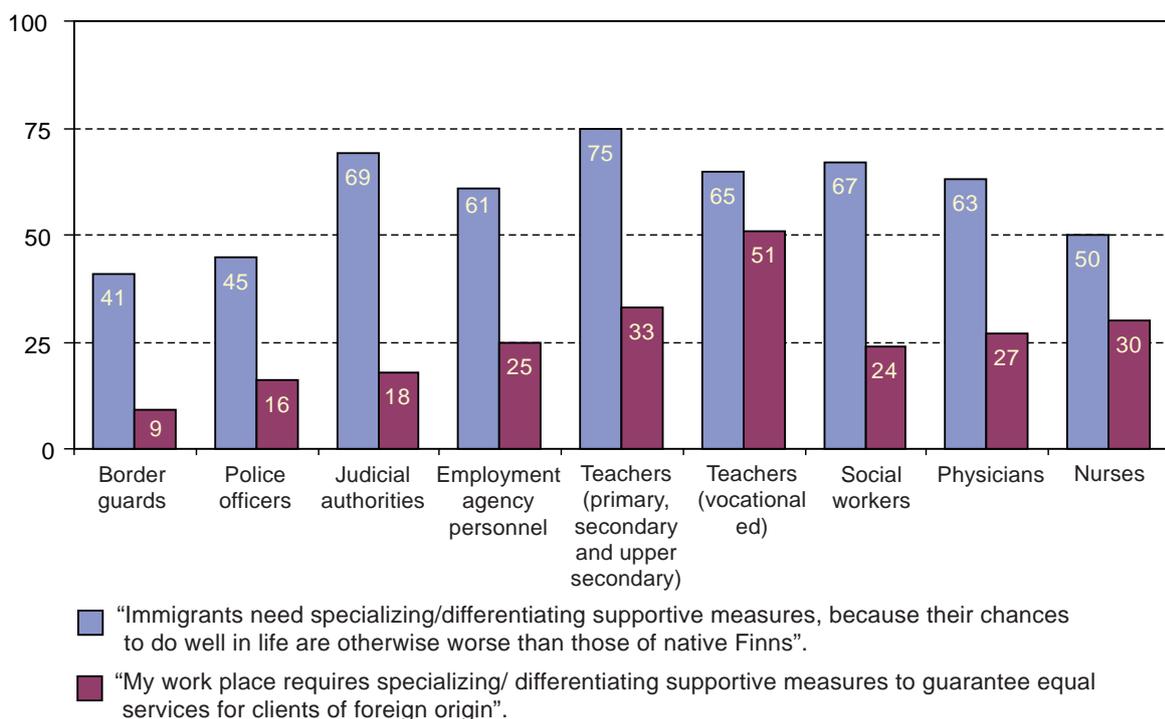
Even if authorities' experiences had been mainly positive, immigrants were still perceived as difficult clients (Pitkänen 2006: 96–99). The problems in multiethnic work culminated in issues concerning intercultural interaction and in organisational aspects. Many authorities, particularly nurses, employment officials and social workers, reported linguistic difficulties and other communication problems in daily interaction situations. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents felt that their training for work in multicultural environments was insufficient. The most desired needs were for language and cultural training. When the findings were compared with those obtained in the late 1990s, it was noted that cultural differences were not perceived to be as problematic as they were seen to be seven years ago. It was also noted that the authorities' confidence in their own readiness to encounter cultural diversity in their work had grown (see Pitkänen and Kouki

1999; 2002). Another group of issues causing concern consisted of organisational factors. The respondents mentioned a relatively large number of problems related to organisational aspects: lack of financial and personnel resources, tight schedules, lack of guidelines, contradictions between directives and practices, and so on (Pitkänen 2006: 83–91).

It was noted that the majority of the respondents stressed the importance of institutional parallelism in service delivery. This is significant, as according to the Non-Discrimination Act (2004/21) the realisation of ethnic equality requires culturally responsive service. In practice, the achievement of equal opportunities presupposes supportive actions for the disadvantaged. It is not enough that all clients are to be treated the same; the authorities should provide additional support to their immigrant and ethnic minority clients. Here, again, it was noted that the authorities' attitudes were remarkably polarized. When asked if they took supportive actions on a general level, respondents were favourably disposed, except for the border guards and police officers. But when the same thing was asked from the perspective of their own work organisation the attitudes were clearly more reserved<sup>6</sup> (see Figure 1).

Even though the responses of authorities from different sectors expressed a true interest in the development of multiethnic client services, there was no readiness to adjust accustomed practices. Instead, it was assumed that immigrant clients would adapt to the established modes of operation of the public sector organisations.<sup>7</sup> This opinion was usually justified by lack of resources, haste, and with the assumption that applying the same standards to everyone would not cause jealousy among the mainstream population. The responses became even more contradictory when the statement 'The

Figure 1. Attitudes towards supportive actions, percentages by professional group



authorities should offer the same service to both Finnish and foreign clients' was included in the survey (Figure 2).

When, for example, as many as 75 per cent of primary, secondary and upper secondary school teachers were in favour of supportive actions, at the same time, 85 per cent of them favoured similar treatment. A similar discrepancy was also seen in the answers of the other groups. In the authorities' comments, demands for similar treatment were very common, such as in the quotations below:

*All clients are treated the same way – if there are any deficiencies, they will be corrected as far as the resources will allow; foreigners do not receive special treatment.* (A police officer)

*The clients are equal, the same procedures and the same treatment.* (A judicial authority)

*We try to take care of everyone according to the same principles regardless of their ethnic background.* (A social worker)

In fact, the policy the public sector authorities supported can be described as universalistic rather than reflecting the politics of difference. Many of the respondents also seemed to be uncertain of the means by which the goal of ethnic equality could be reached. They believed that they were doing the right and proper thing by treating all the clients in the same way. An obvious explanation here is that traditionally, in Finland, universalism has been seen as the attempt to guarantee everyone the right to use public services. The equality principle has been based on the assumption that all clients see the same things as desirable. In the background there is the idea that equality supersedes difference: *people are equal*

*because they are not different* (Matinheikki-Kokko 1997; Pitkänen 2003, 259–272).

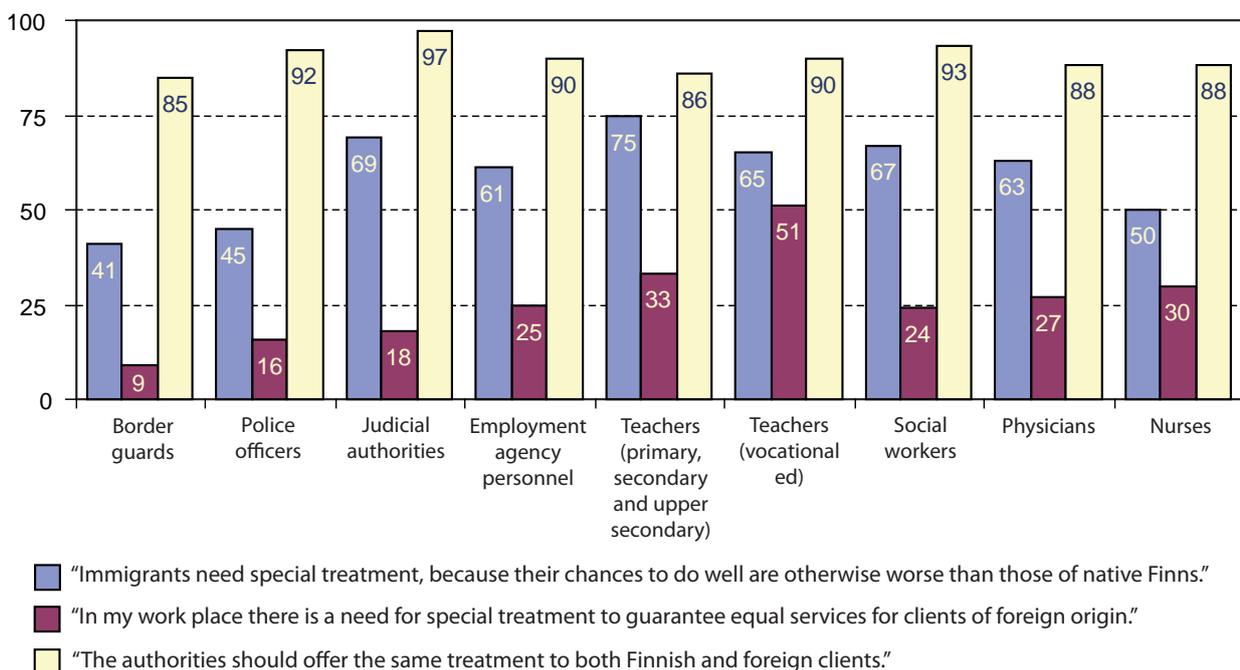
Behind the current policy there lies the notion that *people are different yet they are equal*. Equality consists of equal treatment of those judged to be equal in relevant respects. In a multicultural environment, people are likely to disagree on what respects are relevant in a given context, what response is appropriate to them, and what counts as their equal treatment. Thus, once cultural differences are taken into account, equal treatment does not mean similar but rather differential treatment (Parekh 2000: 242; Pitkänen 2005b: 137–147).

### Discussion

Due to growing volume of immigration and the new citizenship and integration policies in Finland, the sphere of Finnishness is becoming increasingly diverse. This is one of the main challenges arising today in public sector work. It is obvious that the number of people 'not present in the past' is going to increase in the future. As Peter Koehn (2006: 22) writes: "Looking toward the future, the most likely population scenario will involve 'more people, more population movement, more displacement – both internally and internationally – and more demands for effective responses by relevant authorities'" (see Helton 2002: 14).

On the basis of the study conducted it can be said that while, in the last decade, both the demographic construction and the regulations concerning immigration have changed in Finland, one thing has remained constant: the attitudes of civil servants are still selective and rather ethnocentric. Although public sector employees are taking a more positive attitude than

Figure 2. Attitudes towards culturally responsive services and similar treatment, percentages by professional group.



before toward foreign newcomers, their attitudes are noticeably polarized. The most welcome groups are those who benefit Finnish society intellectually or materially and who resemble the native Finns as much as possible. The attitudes are most positive when it comes to West Europeans. Well-educated professionals are better received than those with a lower level of education, but at the same time newcomers are welcome to do less prestigious jobs with low salaries.

Furthermore, the research showed that the implementation of the political goals in public sector work is rather assimilative while, in Finland, in the last decade the general tendency has been towards an integrative policy implying cultural diversity and pluralism. Although authorities theoretically support pluralistic goals, there is no inclination to change the established modes of operation to guarantee culturally responsive treatment for immigrant clients. It is evident that Finnish authorities are aware of the aims presented in the policy documents, and that they have a strong interest in conducting their work as well as possible. Why are there still problems in fulfilling the current policy goals in Finland?

An active immigration policy is a novelty in Finnish society, as the flow of foreigners to Finland has traditionally been restricted in many ways. It also seems that the aims presented from the outside do not always motivate those who work under great pressure; the lack of financial and human resources was remarkably often mentioned by the respondents. In fact, many problematic issues seem to be caused by organisational factors over which individual employees have very little control.

It seems that diversity issues have remained alien to the realities of Finnish public sector organisations. Neither the institutional structures nor the working practices seem to be adapted to cultural diversity. Although authorities claimed to pursue pluralism in their operations, in fact foreign newcomers were expected to adapt to the institutionalized working practices. Finnishness was implicitly seen as a norm. In this respect the situation has remained unchanged: while there was a commitment to pluralistic policies on the level of principles, in their practical work the authorities wanted to continue in the same ways as before. Here seems to be hidden a major challenge for the fulfilment of the current political goals: a culturally diverse working environment can be truly pluralistic only when common working practices and best courses of action are searched for together and are made permanent with the aid of structural changes (Grillo 2001; Huttunen 2005: 23).

The role of public sector authorities is pivotal in aiming at equal opportunities for all members of society. The Non-Discrimination Act (2004/21) aims at the eradication of ethnic discrimination. The research results imply that the Finnish authorities are uncertain of the *means* by which the goals of the Act could be achieved. A common belief in Finland has been that equal treatment can overcome the inequalities that exist in society. This may be true in a culturally homogeneous environment where people share largely similar norms, motivations, social customs and patterns of behaviour, but this is not the case in an ethnically and culturally diverse environment (Parekh 2000: 242, 261–262; Pitkänen 2005b: 137–147).

The application of a universalistic equality principle may lead to indirect discrimination if the special needs of each group are not taken into account. It can lead to a point where mainstream clients are comfortable with the practices and procedures, while immigrant and ethnic minority clients find them strange and even discriminative. In this way, the well-meaning administrative activities may lead to *unintentional* discrimination (Hammar-Suutari 2005; 2006, 111–122; Pitkänen 2003, 259–272; Rätty 2002).

It is evident that Finnish authorities are only awakening to the fact that the culture-specific needs of their clients should be taken into account. This challenges public sector organisations to review their personnel training practices. A key issue is how training should be adjusted in response to increasing ethnic and cultural diversity. It is obvious that ignoring diversity issues is no longer an option. Nor is an application of assimilative practices enough to guarantee achieving the current political goals in Finland. Pluralistic goals require cultural adaptation not only from newcomers but also from the mainstream people. This may be felt to be more or less stressful. A common reason for this stress is that there is a need for both learning and discarding learning: ‘unlearning’ established modes of operation and conventional patterns of behaviour (Beamer and Varner 2001; Pitkänen 2005b: 141–144; Smith and Bond 1993: 176). Immigrant clients may be considered troublesome for this very reason: clients with a foreign background create for the authorities a need to review their traditional working practices.

In order to intervene in confusing situations, there is a need to perceive, and possibly anticipate, the circumstances that may cause stumbling blocks to intercultural interaction. Intercultural interaction as an everyday experience requires multicultural awareness and skills to manage anxiety caused by cultural differences in interaction with people who see the world from perspectives which may be different or even in conflict with one’s own personal values and beliefs. It seems that if the participants in interaction situations come from very different cultures, there is a high likelihood that their initial understanding of an event will differ. As a consequence, the behaviours evoked by these situational representations are likely to differ, so that the participants’ responses to the same behaviour setting may contradict each other’s expectations. Coordinating behaviour becomes difficult, and attention must be shifted towards negotiating shared meanings about the situation if the relationship is to continue (Smith and Bond 1993: 176).

A person’s ability to do multiethnic and multicultural work is tested especially when cross-cultural contacts are regular and continuous. On the other hand, daily interaction in a multiethnic work community may at its best serve as cultural learning: it can hone the skills for intercultural interaction and remove prejudices and stereotypical expectations. According to Kim and Gudykunst (1998), prejudices diminish as the contacts between different groups increase, become more personal and more diverse. Mere interaction, however, is not enough to eradicate prejudices or to improve the attitudinal atmosphere in public sector work. For that to happen, intercultural interaction and collaboration need to be successful.

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## Notes

- 1 I want to thank Ms. Iira Nuutinen and Ms. Stina Hacklin who assisted me in the collection and analysis of the statistical data.
- 2 This depends, of course, on the legislation of the other country in question. According to the former legislation (the Nationality Act 1984/584:§4), for a Finnish citizen the acquisition of citizenship of another country meant the loss of Finnish citizenship, and vice versa, for an immigrant the acquisition of Finnish citizenship meant the loss of the former citizenship. There, however, was one exception: people who were born after 31 August 1966 and who had a multicultural family background could attain dual citizenship in Finland upon notification because both spouses could transmit their nationality to their children. (Harinen et al. 2007: 130.)
- 3 Examples of indirect discrimination include requiring perfect fluency in Finnish as a condition for being hired for a job although this is not necessary for the performance of the work (Ministry of Labour 2007).
- 4 Therefore the Sami as indigenous people, as well as the Roma and other groups have the constitutional right to maintain and develop their own language and culture.
- 5 The research results imply that negative attitudes were more common among officials who are mainly implementing *immigration* policy in their work (border guards, police officers, e.g.), compared to other groups who are mainly implementing *integration* policy (social workers, e.g.).
- 6 The clearest difference, 42 percentage points, was visible between among primary and upper secondary teachers.
- 7 Likewise, the research conducted at the end of the 1990s (Pitkänen and Kouki 1999, 2002) showed that the authorities easily added the clients' wish for the same treatment to the regulations.

Kielo Brewis

## Stress in the Multi-Ethnic Customer Contacts of the Finnish Civil Servants: Developing Critical Pragmatic Intercultural Professionals

Lectio praecursoria, 27 September 2008, University of Jyväskylä

This dissertation contains two interconnected research topics with several subthemes: The first topic is the cultural adaptation process of Finnish civil servants in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts. The second topic is intercultural competence as the natural outcome of this process, when it is successful. A holistic view at how the process and the goal in cultural adaptation are intertwined is particularly helpful for intercultural training purposes, which is the practical motivation for this dissertation. I am particularly interested in host culture nationals' intercultural competence in professional contexts.

Paying attention to the host culture perspective in its own right is a fairly new phenomenon in intercultural research, not only in Finland, but also globally speaking. This is so despite the fact that the field of intercultural communication studies as a modern academic discipline actually emerged from a domestic setting in the United States along with studies on linguistic relativity and cultural values among North American Indian groups, Mormons, Spanish Americans and Texans. However, since the Second World War, the host culture nationals' perspective has been largely ignored in intercultural research, or alternatively, it has only been looked at from the point of view of how host culture nationals' attitudes affect immigrants' cultural adaptation. Only recently has the focus been directed more towards the idea of mutual change.

This is the first Doctoral Dissertation in the subject of Intercultural Communication at the Department of Communication at Jyväskylä University. Thus it is appropriate that its main focus, host culture nationals, is also in the forefront of intercultural research today. It takes the view that in Finnish society as a whole, there needs to be a clearer recognition of host culture nationals' cultural adaptation process in intercultural contact situations. For a balanced understanding of cultural adaptation as a two-way process, open forums are needed for host culture nationals to recount their experiences.

This dissertation provides one such forum by looking at a selection of multi-ethnic customer contacts through the eyes of certain Finnish civil servants. Some of the issues that are looked at are how do various stress factors, such as language issues and cultural differences in communication, affect them?

What feelings arise? What are seen to be the drawbacks and benefits of this kind of work? How do they see their own role and that of their multi-ethnic clientele? What do they consider to be effective or poor communication? How do they process their experiences? The civil servants' own voice is heard as much as possible through their own comments.

The empirical data for this thesis was collected through questionnaires in connection with intercultural training seminars which I ran between May 2004 and December 2006 for the staff members of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) and the Directorate of Immigration, which as of 1 January 2008 has changed its name to the Finnish Immigration Service. Both of these are important actors from the point of view of intercultural communication, as most foreigners coming to reside in Finland need to be in contact with them in the course of their stay in the country.

This dissertation shows that host culture nationals experience similar reactions and misinterpretations in intercultural communication than do any cultural newcomers, such as immigrants, while they are on cultural learning curve and going through cultural adaptation.

Stress is part of this adaptive process and it also features prominently in Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts. It comes out in comments like: "Tired and frustrated feeling," "confused state of mind," "mentally 'breathless' feeling," "agitated, anxious, tense, mental overdrive," "sense of helplessness lingers on." The indication of these results for Finnish working life is that there needs to be a more systematic approach to host culture nationals' intercultural training in professional contexts. This training needs to include understanding concerning the cultural adaptation process as a whole, in addition to intercultural communication skills. Validating the cultural adaptation process of host culture nationals can help them to gain intercultural competence. It can also have a role in preventing negative attitudes towards persons of other cultures and help in creating a positive multicultural environment with good ethnic relations.

Multi-ethnic customer contacts only provide a very limited contact zone with ethnic non-Finns. This makes them all

the more demanding, and also more stressful, from the point of view of successful and effective intercultural communication. The results of the three surveys for which this research is based show that the very lack of wider cultural contact needs to be compensated by contextualised intercultural competence. I place this particular kind of host culture nationals' intercultural professional competence within Salo-Lee's (2006) discussion on various perspectives on intercultural competence and suggest it to be called the globalizing/localising perspective of 'being between our/their culture.' I see this as a future working life scenario for an increasing number of people in societies where multiculturalism is the norm, and where mutual learning is called for. To quote Dr. Bennett: "In many countries, the shift from homogeneity to diversity as the new social norm requires a rethinking of the processes, mechanisms and relationships necessary for democratic policy." For example, intercultural competence in dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds has been included as an ethical standard by both the American and Canadian Psychological Associations.

This dissertation shows that in Finland, the growing multiculturalism of the society places increasing demands on host culture members' intercultural competence in many areas of life, including the public sector, which is the concern of this dissertation. While the number of foreigners residing in this country in the middle of the 1970s was only around 10,000, by the end of the year 2007 the figure was already over 132,000 persons. The number of naturalised Finns is also growing steadily and is already over 170,000.

The government has also taken a more active stance in the field of immigration by appointing the first ever Minister of Migration and European Affairs in Finland in April 2007, when the new government was formed. Already prior to that, over the past few years, the government's immigration policy started calling for more effective integration of the immigrant population and for better ethnic relations. The policies also began to show more interest in work-related immigration, as with an ageing population, acquiring workers from abroad has become one means to secure the economic well-being of the country. Finland has active labour recruiting programmes abroad. This will gradually increase the immigrant population further in addition to spontaneous migrants, who come to this country because of work, family or studies, and persons arriving through international protection channels. These few facts and figures indicate that immigration issues have multiplied and diversified in the Finnish society quite rapidly over past decade and a half, presenting major challenges for intercultural learning for the newcomers and the host community alike.

For the public sector, this challenge means recognition on the institutional level that multi-ethnic customer contacts are crucial integration arenas, so to speak. An interculturally competent civil service can assist greatly in the smooth integration of immigrants, but adequate resources need to be invested into developing and supporting such competence.

As for the individual civil servants involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts, this dissertation points out how important

it is to understand their critical role in these seemingly brief moments of everyday encounters with their multiethnic clientele. They can make integration a conscious part of their intercultural professional competence in the customer contacts. This means making the Finnish system more understandable to the newcomers, fostering mutual dialogue and being able to apply the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination in a manner that ensures that the multi-ethnic clientele receive a genuinely equal opportunity for participation in society.

It is important to note that what people choose to do, say, and be in these situations, or equally what they leave out, can make a big difference. In the words of one Finnish civil servant: "For the situation to go smoothly, often all it calls for is some small concession, such as one extra greeting, which a Finnish civil servant would not normally give to a Finnish customer." Thus, in intercultural encounters, being sensitive even in small things that are associated with cultural identity can make a big difference in being an effective communicator.

The above example shows that in this dissertation, I view cultural identity important in describing and explaining intercultural communication. I approach host culture adaptation as coping with stress and learning new skills and behaviour on the one hand, and developing an interculturally sensitive identity on the other hand. I define surface level intercultural competence as effectiveness in communication, which is rooted in the deep level intercultural sensitisation of a person's awareness and attitudes.

I also ask how do people develop intercultural competence in practice. I suggest that it happens as a continual back and forth movement of creating intercultural space between opposing pull factors that pitch a person's own, local cultural perspective against a more relativist, global stance. For describing these processes, I utilise a dialectic view of the conceptual pairs of globalizing/localizing identities adapted from Lie's (2003) intercultural communication theory from the field of media, and ethnocentrism vs. ethnorelativism adapted from Bennett's (1986, 1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. I connect the detailed working out of this process to the components of intercultural competence as I define them.

The last question I ask is what kind of intercultural training could best motivate the trainees to become critical pragmatic intercultural agents of change in their contextualised professional roles?

I would like to conclude by giving the last word to the Finnish civil servants and hear what some of them consider to be the perceived gains in being involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts, despite the stress stated at the beginning:

"Interesting and rewarding, especially when one has to try and find a new way of expressing oneself, so that the other person understands the matter I am explaining." "I feel that I am developing and learning things. They bring joy to my work, widen my horizons, teach me things." "Simply, people!"

Laura Schwöbel

## Migration Matters: Immigration, Homelands, and Border Crossings in Europe and the Americas: Highlights of the Sixth Biennial MESEA Conference in Leiden, the Netherlands, June 25–28, 2008

MESEA, which is short for the Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies: Europe and the Americas, is a transatlantic network founded in 1998 in Heidelberg in order to provide an international forum for interdisciplinary discussion on multi-ethnic studies. MESEA's office is based in Heidelberg (Germany) and further information concerning the society and upcoming events is available at [www.mesea.org](http://www.mesea.org). In June 2008, the sixth MESEA conference was held in Leiden, the Netherlands, quite close to Amsterdam. According to the information given by the society's president Dorothea Fischer-Hornung (University of Heidelberg, Germany), there were about 250 participants from over 35 countries. The atmosphere of the conference was inspired by the multi-disciplinary background of its participants, which was well reflected in the presentations and discussions of the panel sessions. While the majority seemed to be scholars of literature and art, there were also many participants from other academic backgrounds, such as history, cultural anthropology and geography. The program offered its participants 61 interesting panel sessions and three exciting keynote lectures within the period of 4 days. The next conference will be arranged in 2010. Of special interest for me were the presentations and lectures dealing with the question of identity and identification process in the context of immigration. In the following, I discuss some of the research projects presented at the conference in relation to this topic while referring to examples taken from the panel sessions as well as the keynote speeches.

### Migrants' identification processes – two case studies

The panel Popular Representations of the Migrating Other, chaired by Angelika Dietz, University of Ulster (UK), had three presentations. The first, by Angelika Dietz, was titled Migration and Home(lands): The Case of Italian Immigrants in Northern Ireland. Thematically, Dietz focused on national

identity and national images. Before migration, Italian immigrants tend to identify with the region they used to live in, such as Tuscany or Sardinia. However, during migration a nationalization process takes place. Dietz explained this shift from a regional to a national identification by the phenomena of "Othering" and "Self-Othering" which take place once Italians have moved to Northern Ireland. Abroad, the various Italian regions are not that well known and thus the national context gains greater significance. In reference to Dietz's results, it would be interesting to find out whether this is a general process that also takes place within other immigrant groups.

The second paper in this panel was presented by Méri Frotscher Kramer, University of Western Parana, Brazil. Based on fieldwork conducted in Brazil, this paper focused on exploring the images immigrants produce of the other and what they actually tell us about the person producing these images. Frotscher Kramer focussed on Brazilian temporary immigrants to Austria and Switzerland, who by the help of mediators find jobs in restaurants, bars and on farms doing so-called DDD (= dirty-dangerous-demeaning) jobs. The data on which this paper was based on consisted of interviews with Brazilian temporary workers before and after going to Austria and Switzerland. It also included many photos which Frotscher Kramer had received from her informants. Amongst others, there was a picture of a medical helicopter, which should symbolically present to the viewer the great health system of their host country. However, the photos did not only function as a method to assert the image that Brazilian workers had of their host country, but also as a tool to understand how migrants perceived themselves and how they wanted to be perceived. In the home societies of the migrants Frotscher Kramer worked with, migration is associated with an improvement of the economical and thus the social status of the migrant. Symbolically, this is reflected on a picture taken from an Internet forum, where a Brazilian worker stands next to a Mercedes

somewhere in Switzerland or Austria. Despite the fact that he does not own this car, his gesture and the picture seem to prove that he could own it. Frotscher Kramer's method of using photographs in order to grasp the identification process her informants go through during migration seems to be a fresh approach that promises interesting results also for other future research projects.

Both Dietz and Frotscher Kramer's papers emphasized the fact that in the interviews their informants constructed a national image of the host country by contrasting it to the image they had of themselves and their own nation. In the case of Italian immigrants, warm weather, good food and friendly people were things they would describe as positive about their home country, but miss in Northern Ireland. Brazilians, on the other hand, would describe Austria and Switzerland as clean countries with a good healthcare system, both of which Brazil could not offer to them, but criticized Austria's and Switzerland's emotional coldness.

### Immigrants of tomorrow, today and yesterday

The three keynote speakers of the conference were Saskia Sassen, Han Entzinger and Lubaina Himid. Saskia Sassen, who is Professor of Sociology and member of the Committee on Global thought at the Columbia University, highlighted in her address titled *The Right to Have Rights: Immigrants and Citizens in the Global City* the important role cities have in the process of negotiating immigrants' rights. Unlike in rural areas, urban space turns powerless immigrants into a complex and thus into significant others whom a city has to deal with. Han Entzinger, Professor of Migration and Integration Studies at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, described the various pathways of immigration and provided an overview of the

development of immigration and integration policies in Western countries.

The last keynote speaker of the conference was the artist, curator, and activist Lubaina Himid who is also Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. Himid drew on two of her major art works, called *Naming the Money* (2006) and *Negative Positives* (2007). Both works deal with the issue of how black people's identities had been and still are constructed by the Other. In *Naming the Money*, it is the black slave servants of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe who had to give up their original names and professions and accept new names and occupations that white people gave them. As Himid showed on a videotape, her impressive art work consists of one hundred life-sized cut-out and painted figures who tell their stories to the audience on a soundtrack: "My name is..., but they call me...I used to do..., now I do...But..." As Himid emphasized in her lecture, this work does not only attempt to reclaim a sense of identity and dignity for these people, but also wants to highlight the fact that immigrants have helped to build the city and contributed immensely to the current economic foundation of Europe – which is still true for present-day migrants. Himid's other work, *Negative Positives*, consists of a collection of Guardian newspaper pages. All the pages show people from Africa or the Black diaspora and by reworking the pages with colorful patterns, Himid succeeds in revealing the subtle narratives that construct the media image of these people.

I want to thank the Finnish Concordia Fund for providing me the great opportunity to take part in the sixth MESEA conference.

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**Singla, Rashmi (2008) Now and Then. Life Trajectories, Family Relationships, and Diasporic Identities: A Follow-up Study of Young Adults. Copenhagen Studies in Bilingualism Volume 46. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, Faculty of the Humanities. 212 pages.**

Rashmi Singla has done what many people think should be done, a follow-up study of young people with immigrant background. The initial material was gathered in the mid-1990s, and published in *Youth Relationships, Ethnicity & Psychosocial Intervention* in 2004 (New Delhi: Books Plus). At the time, the youth were in their late teens or early adulthood. Singla repeated the interviews ten years later, in 2005–2006. The original sample of fourteen was reduced to nine. *Now and Then—Life Trajectories, Family Relationships, and Diasporic Identities* tells the story of the changes that have taken place during the intervening decade. Singla is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology and Educational Studies, Roskilde University, Denmark.

The study is structured according to social scientific conventions: introduction, theory, methods, analysis and discussion. The key idea of the book is to look at the vertical (parents, older relatives) and horizontal (peers, friends, partners) social relationships of the interviewees from a life-course perspective. In other words, the author pursues what kinds of meaningful social relations the interviewed persons have had since childhood and how they have changed. Through this setting, the concepts of identity, intersectionality and diaspora are introduced. The analysis takes place by dividing the respondents into natives (ethnic Danes, 4 persons) and people with immigrant background (immigrant parents, 5 persons). Respondents with immigrant background come from India and Pakistan. Two-thirds of the interviewees are male.

Singla (p. 11) sets two central questions to which the study seeks answers: 1) What are the life trajectories of the young adults like in regard to their horizontal and vertical family relationships and their extra-familial relationships? 2) What are their life trajectories like in regard to their diasporic identities?

Young adults with South Asian background are often assumed to marry earlier, have closer relationships with their parents and relatives and live more stable lives than their peers in the majority population. Nevertheless, Singla points out the increasingly later age of marriage, formation of nuclear instead of extended families as well as intergenerational conflicts. Also, differences between the discourse of what should

be done and what actually takes place are significant. The young adults are more Europeanised than their parents, many of whom have also changed their attitudes and let their children have more room to negotiate their lives than would be the case in their country of origin. According to Singla, this applies also to arranged transnational marriages, in relation to which young persons' agency is dramatically underestimated in the public debate (p. 158).

Singla elucidates differences between various settlements of South Asians in Europe. An informant whose sister lives in Birmingham states that Pakistanis in Birmingham are more conservative and "culturally different" than those living in Denmark (p. 155). This implies different trajectories of integration by the same ethnic group in various national and local contexts, which should receive more attention in studies of immigrants in European cities. To a similar effect, Patrick Ireland's study *Becoming Europe. Immigration, Integration, and the Welfare State* (2004, University of Pittsburgh Press) delineates vast differences in local level integration policies in eight European cities that – according to him – are sometimes more influential than national level policies.

Young adults' interest to visit parents' places of origin seem rather ambivalent and small-scale. Several of the respondents did not have particularly close transnational ties, even if their parents did. Those with stronger ties outside Denmark had connections not only to their parents' country of origin, but also to other European countries, where their relatives or friends lived. However, on the level of identity relations to India or Pakistan still remained important, and not least because of the host society's tendency to view and define them as "Pakistani" or "Indian." The idea of returning "home" is almost absent from these young adults' lives, as their "home" is obviously the place where they live, Denmark. The diasporic identities of the young adults had changed since the previous interview, now being more independent of their parents' networks and used as a positive tool in identity maintenance. It can be understood as a process of growing up, distancing themselves from their parents and then returning back to them. The relationships between the young adults and their elders are actually now better and more equal than before.

Altogether, the book tells stories of small and large changes, and shifts in discourse and emphasis. It challenges several stereotypes regarding young adults of South Asian background in diaspora. The young adults are more independent, more “Danish” and more reflective of their “Pakistan-ness” than before. They make independent decisions about their lives while respecting their parents’ wishes. However, there is no doubt that the surrounding society has deeply changed their attitudes towards parental relationships and the norm of an ideal family. Although there is some pressure based on their ethnic background, the challenges of everyday life, their parents’ gradually deteriorating health and dreams for the future are far more important factors shaping these young adults’ lives.

Unfortunately, the book has been published in a hurry. It is full of mistakes in layout, spelling and language. The argumentation would have significantly improved if the text had been edited more rigorously. Now, for instance, the different sections of the book are not as much in dialogue with each other as they could be, but stand out as somewhat separate

entities. These flaws reduce the usefulness of the text in university education, where studies should provide a model for students.

Nevertheless, the book has its merits as indicated earlier. It provides a rare example of a follow-up study that may serve as a model for forthcoming work on the topic. Also, the changes in the attitudes and life-trajectories that Singla describes are sure to be repeated and challenged in further research. Unfortunately, the original sample was rather small and it may even be reduced in forthcoming follow-ups. Singla would have done a favour to herself if she had increased the sample at the second stage. In any case, I am convinced that people looking at the development of youth with immigrant background will find many valuable ideas in the book. As such it stands out as a study to which there is not much competition in the Nordic countries.

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## Etmu Award 2008 granted to Risto Laakkonen

The ETMU Recognition Award is granted annually at the ETMU Days to recognize major contributions to the promotion and research of ethnic relations in Finland.

The ETMU Recognition Award 2008 was granted on 24 October at the ETMU Days held in Helsinki to *Risto Laakkonen*. Risto Laakkonen has already on an early phase been sensitive to issues related to minority rights, ethnic relations, racism and xenophobia in Finland. He was also a strong voice within the Finnish public administration to pay attention to issues related to migration and integration. Furthermore, he has contributed to the development of research resources and other conditions for the study on ethnic relation.

Before retiring in 2004, Risto Laakkonen worked as a diplomat accredited to Stockholm and Oslo, and as a civil servant at the Finnish Ministry of Labour. He was the Secretary General of the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, ETNO, in 1986–2004 and the Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs in 2002–2003. Risto Laakkonen has also been engaged in international activities concerning migration, and he has produced publications on labour markets, international issues, ethnic relations and racism. In 2006, Risto Laakkonen was appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador by ETNO and in 2007 he received the title of a Chancellery Counsellor from the President of the Republic. After retiring Risto Laakkonen has still been active as a lecturer and as an instructor.

Former recipients of the ETMU Recognition Award are Academician *Erik Allardt* (2004), Professor Emerita *Marja-Liisa Swantz* (2005), Professor *Karmela Liebkind* (2006) and Professor Emeritus *Tom Sandlund* (2007).

**Julios, Christina (2008) Contemporary British Identity: English Language, Migrants and Public Discourse, Ashgate: Aldershot and Burlington. 210 pages. ISBN 978-0-7546-7158-9**

Christina Julios explores British identity through an analysis of the English language and its potential to include and exclude migrants. Reiterating a long-explored question, she asks what is Britishness, answering that variations across time in public and policy responses to migrants and their languages and to migrants' acquisition of, and ability in, the English language have shaped the way Britishness has evolved and the way Britishness is seen by those outside Britain.

Julios identifies three periods of time which are distinct from each other in their articulation of the essence of Britishness. She argues that the difference in public attitudes and policy directions between these periods impact on notions of Britishness and adversely affect the inclusion of migrants within British society. 1900s-1950s represents an era the author terms *laissez-faire* characterized by nationalistic post-war sentiment, evident in support given to State institutions such as Parliament, the monarchy, and the Church of England, all of which conveyed an essence of Britishness and became pillars of British civil society. The arrival of Caribbean migrants on the Windrush in 1948 tested the boundaries of what and who could be British as Britain was transformed into a diverse and multifaith nation. As a result, a period began in which multiculturalism was favoured as the way to create a space for migrants within Britain (1960-1980s). Embracing difference and calling Britain a 'community of communities' (Parekh 2000) characterized this period. However, despite multicultural legislation, lack of tolerance or understanding persisted as the value of multiculturalism was questioned and critics opposed it on grounds of divisiveness. The 1990s-2000s heralded a period in which integration was called for in order to achieve a cohesive society which emphasised Britishness and common values. Prime Minister of the time, Tony Blair, introduced legislation which required immigrants to pass a citizenship test in order to be granted British citizenship. In addition to passing a written test, the requirements for British citizenship now include possessing a command of the English language, making a pledge of allegiance, and taking a citizenship oath.

Britishness and language are inextricably tied together for Julios. Indeed, language ability has a direct impact on set-

tlement experiences and economic security and therefore on feelings of belonging and inclusion. Representing social and human capital, language shapes labour market participation and success (Boyd 1991: 5) and is key to immigrants gaining social and economic status in the country of settlement and to their being perceived as part of that society. The connection between language and identity is evidenced by the priority migrant parents give to passing on the mother tongue to their children in order to instil cultural understanding of, and loyalty to, the country of origin (Hopkins 2005: 188-190). Furthermore, English as a Second Language (ESL) tuition, which Julios explores in depth, either assumes or is enhanced by literacy: a population with low levels of language fluency and of literacy generally may not learn a host language quickly (Boyd 1991: 16) and may not be quick to acquire feelings of belonging to their new society. It is for this reason that Julios has approached Britishness and migrants in Britain through the lens of language.

Pointing out that English is spoken by at least 1.2 billion people, Julios considers the global prevalence of the English language, attributing its spread to the influence of the British Empire and to the dominance of the United States as an English-speaking world superpower. Chapter two develops an argument that suggests anyone who does not possess English language ability is at a disadvantage especially, although not only, when they migrate to an English-speaking country. Julios describes this situation of disadvantage as linguistically hierarchical and it is in this context that she considers ESL tuition. The author argues that not only the lack of English language but unfamiliarity with any form of literacy and the lack of recognition of academic credentials, shape migrants' social standing in the context of Britain, leading to what Julios terms cultural and linguistic fragmentation.

ESL tuition has been an important tool promoted by British policymakers to create linguistic cohesion through acquisition by migrants of English as a second language. For Julios, however, it is the way Anglo-Saxon society interacts with migrants for whom English is a second language that creates the framework upon which Britishness and British identity are built. She argues that it is not only visible difference but linguistic

difference and linguistic ability that are factors of inclusion and exclusion.

This book traces how British national identity has evolved over the past 100 years, and strives to give insight into the puzzle that is Britishness. By discussing ESL and the challenges of educating migrants and migrant children, this book helps the reader comprehend how a lack of fluency may inhibit the formation of a British identity and may be a barrier to inclusion in British society. The author's argument leans against advocating English as a common language with which to bind British citizens together, her reasons being the disadvantages this affords some migrants and the linguistic hierarchy this ultimately creates.

There are one or two worrying points in the book, for example when the author appears to assume that children of migrants and those of mixed background will not be included as British (p. 9), and a section on Puerto Ricans where the author seems to essentialize this group saying that "even the music they listen to cannot strictly be described as Latino" (p. 13). Also, the case study which focuses on the United States is unnecessarily lengthy. However, the central important theme to this book is, how has British society dealt with the challenge of immigration in relation to national identity?

Julios tackles this question through an examination of language and her answer provides a valuable insight into the ideals which underlie British national identity.

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