

JYU DISSERTATIONS 744

Quivine Ndomo

The Working Underclass

Highly Educated Migrants on the
Fringes of the Finnish Labour Market



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

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Finland's migration regime – the structures and institutions that manage migration and migrant integration such as legal status and citizenship laws – purposively 'creates' and 'multiplies' migrants as particular categories of people and resources. This research illustrates how a working underclass is structurally produced in a Nordic labour market context through a case analysis of integration experiences of highly educated third-country nationals in the Finnish labour market. Through one theoretical and three empirical studies, the dissertation explores the tension between the principally egalitarian Finnish labour market, and a growing category of highly educated and skilled third-country nationals working in low-status jobs at its peripheries. Analysis applies theories of citizenship, labour market segmentation, and disaggregated agency (resilience, reworking, and resistance) to interpret migrants' labour market integration experiences.

The main finding suggests that the Finnish migrant legal status regime helps to socially construct migrants as a different and subordinated class of workers who are often excluded from the protections and privileges of the egalitarian Finnish labour market and welfare system; and are differentially and unequally integrated in the labour market. Contingent economic citizenship principles commodify migrants and marketise integration, while legally reinforced socio-economic precariousness initiates and or reinforces occupational segmentation, with migrants subordinated to peripheral occupations. Integration responsibility is transferred to individual migrants, who counterintuitively reinforce discriminative and exploitative labour market practices through their non-counterhegemonic resilience tactics and reworking strategies.

The dissertation proposes a theoretical explanation for the different and unequal integration of some migrant groups in the Finnish labour market that is unique to Finland. The argument is that a profile of essential, yet socially subordinated occupations, linked to the egalitarian promises of Finnish social welfare sustains the systematic subordination of migrants into a working underclass in the periphery of the Finnish labour market.

Keywords: legal status regimes, social production, labour market segmentation, disaggregated agency, highly educated migrants, Finland

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

Ndomo, Quivine

Työväen aliluokka: Korkeasti koulutetut maahanmuuttajat Suomen työmarkkinoiden laitamilla

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Maahanmuuttoa ja kotoutumista Suomessa ohjaava järjestelmä – rakenteet ja instituutiot, mm. oikeudellinen asema ja kansalaisuuslaki – tuottaa ihmis- ja resurskategorioita, joihin maahanmuuttajat jakautuvat. Väitöskirja analysoi korkeasti koulutettujen kolmansien maiden kansalaisten kokemuksia kotoutumisesta ja osoittaa, kuinka vallitsevat rakenteet tuottavat työtä tekevän alaluokan pohjoismaisille työmarkkinoille. Se selvittää teoreettisen ja empiiristen tutkimusten avulla, millaisia jännitteitä muodostuu periaatteiltaan tasa-arvoisen työmarkkinajärjestelmän ja sen periferiassa matalapalkkatöissä työskentelevien korkeasti koulutettujen siirtolaisten kasvavan joukon välillä. Analyysissä hyödynnetään teorioita kansalaisuudesta, työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisesta ja hajautetusta toimijuudesta selittämään maahanmuuttajien kokemuksia työmarkkinoille integroitumisesta.

Tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että suomalainen maahanmuuttajia erillisiin laillisiin statuksiin luokitteleva järjestelmä rakentaa heistä erillistä ja alempiarvoista työläisten luokkaa, joka on usein suljettu pois suomalaisen tasa-arvoisen työmarkkinajärjestelmän ja hyvinvointivaltion suojelusta ja etuoikeuksista. Nämä henkilöt on toiseutettu ja epätasa-arvoisesti integroitu työmarkkinoille. Ehdolliset markkinakansalaisuuden periaatteet välineellistävät maahanmuuttajia ja tekevät kotoutumisesta markkinaehtoista. Samaan aikaan järjestelmän luoma sosioekonominen haavoittuvuus tuottaa ja ylläpitää ammatillista eriytymistä, jossa heidän asemansa sijaitsee työmarkkinoiden periferiassa. Kotoutumisvastuu on tällöin siirretty yksittäisille henkilöille, jotka oletusten vastaisilla toimillaan ja resilienssiä vahvistavilla taktiikoillaan, itse asiassa vahvistavat diskriminoivia ja hyväksikäyttäviä työmarkkinakäytäntöjä.

Väitöskirja ehdottaa Suomelle ainutlaatuista teoreettista selitysmallia eri maahanmuuttajaryhmien erilaiselle ja eriarvoiselle kotoutumiselle suomalaisille työmarkkinoille. Se argumentoi, että keskeiset vaikkakin sosiaalisesti alempiarvoiset ammatit, yhdessä hyvinvointijärjestelmän tasa-arvolupausten kanssa, ylläpitävät maahanmuuttajien systemaattista alistamista työmarkkinoiden periferiassa sijaitsevaan työläisten alaluokkaan.

Avainsanat: oikeudellinen asema, sosiaalinen tuotanto, työmarkkinasegmentaatio, hajautettu toimijuus, korkeasti koulutetut maahanmuuttajat, Suomi

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Jyväskylä 03.1.2024

Author

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Age structure of Finland's population on 31 December 2022. Source: Statistics Finland: Population Structure.....	25
Figure 2	Age structure of Finland's foreign background population on 31 December 2022. Source: Statistics Finland: Population Structure	25
Figure 3	Number of employed Finnish men (n=1199161) and foreign men (n=111859) by occupational group in 2021. Source: Statistics Finland	34
Figure 4	Number of employed Finnish women (n=1177965) and foreign women (n=85395) by occupational group in 2021. Source: Statistics Finland	35

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	List of interviews.....	43
Table 2	Summary of findings from dissertation articles.....	70

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	11
2	ARTICLE SUMMARIES	16
3	PREMISES OF THE RESEARCH	23
3.1	Research context.....	23
3.1.1	Key issues in migration in the Finnish context.....	23
3.1.2	Key issues in migrant integration in the Finnish context.....	25
3.1.3	Summary of key characteristics of the Finnish labour market	28
3.2	Previous research and finding my niche.....	29
3.2.1	State of the art: Migrant integration in the Finnish labour market	29
3.2.2	Finding my niche	35
3.3	Methodology	36
3.3.1	Philosophical foundation.....	36
3.3.1.1	A social justice world view and a mix of paradigms.....	37
3.3.1.2	Research methods, tools, and techniques	39
3.3.2	The process of collecting empirical data.....	40
3.3.3	Tackling COVID-19 pandemic related challenges	44
3.3.4	Ethical aspects.....	46
3.3.5	Processing the data: Analysis and trustworthiness	50
3.3.5.1	The analysis audit trail	50
3.3.5.2	Reflecting on trustworthiness: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability	51
3.3.6	Strengths and limitations of my methodology	53
3.4	Theoretical Framework.....	54
3.4.1	Economic citizenship	55
3.4.2	Labour market segmentation: Key theoretical tenets	58
3.4.2.1	Labour market segmentation: International outlook	59
3.4.2.2	Labour market segmentation: The Finnish context....	61
3.4.3	Disaggregated (human) agency	65
3.4.4	Summary of theoretical framework	67

4	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	69
4.1	Explaining the differential inclusion of third country national migrants in the Finnish labour market.....	69
4.1.1	Subordinate: Migrants' positions in the Finnish labour market.....	71
4.1.2	The making of a working underclass: The productive role of a legal status regime, labour market segmentation, and migrant agency.....	73
4.1.2.1	The student legal status regime (and refugee and family migrant statuses).....	73
4.1.2.2	Labour market segmentation.....	77
4.1.2.3	Migrant agency.....	78
4.1.3	Finnish priorities: Why some highly educated migrants are misplaced in the Finnish labour market.....	79
5	CONCLUSIONS.....	84
5.1	Concluding remarks.....	84
5.2	Contribution of the study to academic debate.....	87
5.3	A comment for policy.....	89
5.4	Areas for future research – what next from an academic point of view.....	90

ORIGINAL PAPERS

1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation consists of four articles and this summary article, analysing the structural and personal processes of integration that shape the differential inclusion and subordination of highly educated and skilled third country national migrants in the Finnish labour market using qualitative methods.

For the most part, Finnish society and politics are highly unified and consensus based, centred around the idea of a universalist welfare state. In the labour market, this manifests in strong egalitarian norms and institutional structures such as the centralised income policy agreement framework, representing consensual agreement among trade unions, employer associations, and the government that has been the regulative cornerstone of the Finnish labour market model since the 1960s (Vartiainen, 1998; Jonker-Hoffrén, 2020). Collaboration and collective negotiation are among the guiding principles of Finnish industrial relations (Pyöriä & Ojala, 2016, p. 351).

The Finnish labour market is therefore tightly regulated through a collaborative process for negotiating the minimum standards for essential labour market rights, and the distribution of responsibilities between employees and employers. Specifically, at the industry and sector level, collective agreements set the minimum standard for essential terms and conditions of employment such as salaries, annual holidays, conditions of family leave, holiday pay, and other terms not explicitly set in legislation (Bockerman & Uusitalo, 2006).

Collective bargaining agreements are legally binding, and their enforcement is very effective owing to high union membership rates in Finland; Finland has some of the highest union membership rates in Europe at over 70% (see Van Rie, Marx, & Horemans, 2011). Additionally, universal extension of collective agreements ensures coverage for much of the remaining workforce, with two key implications from an equality point of view (Bergholm & Bieler, 2013). First, a labour market standard is set through an industry-wide floor for pay and working conditions, reducing wage dispersion and income inequality within the working class. The other advantage is a relatively compact working class, which reinforces the political strength of the trade unions that is necessary to sustain consensual, collective, and collaborative industrial relations processes.

For the Finnish working class, this generally means better protections from vulnerability to extreme precarity and labour market insecurities, especially those that emanate from employers' competition-seeking behaviour such as cheap labour business models with precarious employment norms. However, this is not to say that the Finnish labour market and workers are immune to the precarisation of work and other labour market insecurities (Jakonen, 2015). Employers do try and sometimes succeed to evade rules, and the Finnish government's ambition for international competitiveness has come into tension with the welfarist ideals of the labour market from time to time, threatening the protections enjoyed by the working class (Kettunen, 1998; 2004; see also discussion in Scruggs, 2002).

Since 2007/8, collective bargaining has seen increasing decentralisation (Sippola, 2012; Jonker-Hoffrén, 2019, 2020), moving towards the local level and at times subordinating to the export industry, potentially putting more power on the employer side of the negotiating table (Sippola, 2012). However, the dual protection afforded by labour market regulation and the universalist Finnish welfare system have kept the Finnish working class relatively insulated from the worst forms of precarity and exploitation, such as wage-based labour market segmentation (Oinas et al., 2012; Mustosmäki, 2017). Extreme precarity in employment and socio-economic security that often drives poverty in many other countries is not widespread in Finland (Puig-Barrachina et al., 2014; Halleröd, Ekbrand, & Bengtsson, 2015; Pyöriä & Ojala, 2016).

However, Finnish employers looking to work around industrial relations conditions that are unfavourable for their profit and competition agenda turn to exploitable migrant workers who are easily excluded from some labour market and welfare protections, and are generally more exposed for differential treatment (see e.g., Anderson 2010; Ollus, 2016a, b). This is not to say that all migrants, or that only migrant workers in the Finnish context are or can be precarised. However, the legally and socially constructed distinctions between migrants and ethnic Finns have implications for access to rights and membership in the working class, and thereby place migrants in a more readily precarised position.

Since the 1990s, Finland has received significant numbers of migrants, initially consisting mainly of refugees fleeing wars in Chile, Somalia, Vietnam, and the Balkans, as well as Ingrian Finns who returned following the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Koikkalainen, 2021). Later migrations were more diverse, encompassing family migrants, labour migrants, international student migrants, and refugees and asylum seekers. Having been predominantly an emigration country until the 70s, Finland lacked a reliable migration policy basis, and through the 1980s and 90s took an assimilationist approach in which migrants were seen as a social problem to be fixed using welfare resources (Forsander & Trux, 2002; Forsander, 2003).

These strategies predictably failed to facilitate migrants' labour market participation, but also failed to address any challenges to migrant labour market integration from the employer side such as discrimination. The already very high

unemployment rates among migrants, averaging 45% throughout the 1990s, was worsened by the economic recession of the same period (Valtonen, 2001). In the 1990s, emerging challenges to migrant labour market integration were also not addressed as they emerged; challenges were attributed to the harsh economic climate and were not revisited as the economy improved, setting a poor precedent for future integration (Valtonen, 2001, p.423).

To date, migrant labour market integration in Finland, measured in terms of employment rates, trails that of ethnic Finns. On average, the unemployment rate of the worst affected groups (such as Black Africans and migrants from the Middle East, the focus group of this research) is three times higher than the national average (Integration Indicators Database, 2022). Multiple structural, cultural, and social challenges exclude or hinder migrant labour market participation in Finland (Heikkilä, 2005; Ahmad, 2020a, b). In 2020, a correspondence-based empirical experiment found strong evidence of ethnicity-based discrimination in employer hiring practices, and an ethnic hierarchy in which migrants from Africa and the Middle East are the least favoured (Ahmad 2020, a; see also Ahmad, 2020, b).

Legally and socially constructed differences between migrants and Finnish citizens set up the Finnish labour market for at least one form of segmentation: segmentation between a de facto Finnish working class, and an alternative migrant working class, with hierarchies within each of the classes. The former class would enjoy better protections than the latter, which, however, would still benefit from several provisions of the Finnish labour market model such as the coverage of universally extended collective agreements.

How migrant workers are distinguished or socially “constructed” through structural social constitutive processes that shape and are embedded in the migrant integration process is the focus of this research. The objective of the research is to advance understanding of the productive functions of the structural and personal processes of integration that shape the differential inclusion of third country national migrants in the Finnish labour market. To meet the objective of the research, four original studies were carried out, one theoretical analysis, and three qualitative empirical enquiries probing the research question from varied perspectives as follows.

The first article titled ‘Migrants’ economic integration: Problematizing economic citizenship’, frames migrant labour market integration in contemporary capitalist economies in an economic citizenship theory model of inclusion to theoretically explain contemporary migrant integration trajectories. It provides the theoretical basis for this summary article, and together with contextually selected theories, guides theoretical argument in the other three studies of the dissertation.

The second article titled ‘Staying Because of all Odds: Lived experiences of African student migrants in Finland’, characterises the social and economic aspects of migrant integration in Finland, focusing on the bordering role of different institutions and structures that shape migrants’ integration decisions. The article provides a broad stroke analysis of the labour market position of African student migrants in Finland in terms of the category of jobs occupied. It

also explores the role of varied Finnish institutions in research participant decision making, especially the decisions to stay in Finland, to join the labour market, and to start a family.

The third article titled 'Resistance is Useless! (And so are resilience and reworking): Migrants in the Finnish Labour Market', focuses specifically on migrants' individual agency-driven labour market integration efforts aimed at improving labour market position.

The fourth article titled 'Essential? COVID-19 and highly educated Africans in Finland's segmented labour market', examines developments regarding migrants' position in the Finnish labour market in the context of labour market disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A holistic consideration of the findings of the three empirical studies, framed by the theoretical insights from the first study, converge in one overarching issue – the labour market position research participants occupy in Finland. The overarching research questions that the dissertation addresses are identified as:

1. **What is the position that highly educated third country national migrants occupy in the Finnish labour market?**
2. **What are the structural and personal factors shaping that position?**
3. **Why are they in that position?**

These three questions are answered in Chapter 4 of this summary article, by re-analysing and synthesising the discrete findings of the four studies composing the dissertation. The concepts of contingent economic citizenship, differential inclusion/exclusion, and subordination are used to abstract the findings of the discrete studies and allow theoretical interpretation.

The remainder of this summary article is structured as follows. In **Chapter Two**, I present a summary of the publications constituting the dissertation. I present them at this stage so they can provide the background and context for the rest of the summary article. This is followed by **Chapter Three**, in which I establish the premise of my research and the niche to which I contribute. Here, I first present contextual information about migration to Finland and key issues in migrant integration before summarising the contributions of relevant literature. This helps me to demarcate areas in need of further investigation and to situate my research. After that I discuss the theories framing the individual studies constituting the dissertation as well as this summary article. Lastly, I delve into a methodological discussion, presenting and justifying method decisions, and addressing challenges encountered in the research process, including issues of positionality in detail. **Chapter Four** is a theoretically abstracted discussion of the findings of the four studies and aims at answering the three overarching questions of the dissertation. I will characterise the labour market position the migrant group under study occupies using the concept of subordination. Then, using concepts from economic citizenship theories, I theorise the structural productive processes that help to socially construct research participants as occupiers of the apparent labour market position. I finish the discussion by

theorising why migrants are in that labour market position. This is followed by concluding remarks in **Chapter Five**. Chapter Five also discusses contributions of the study and recommendations for future studies.

2 ARTICLE SUMMARIES

The first article titled “*Migrants economic integration: Problematizing economic citizenship*” (Lillie & Ndomo, 2021) is a theoretical paper. Our objective with this article was to use citizenship theory and the related concepts of commodification and contingent inclusion to frame and unpack contemporary migration and integration generally, including labour market integration. Therefore, in the article, integration is re-imagined or conceptualised as a historically situated struggle to restrict or extend citizenship to individuals. We then drew on this to show how in the context of migration, integration is necessitated by both territorial limitations of national citizenship, and host countries’ regulation of migrants’ access to national citizenship rights. The analysis connects what happens in practical migration and integration scenarios with economic citizenship theory explanations, from the heavy workfare orientation in national integration programmes, to popular migration management tools such as temporary migration schemes. The analysis therefore develops a theoretical model for interpreting migrant integration experiences and has been used in the analysis section of this summary article (Chapter four) in that way.

The main argument the article makes is that excessive commodification of citizenship, converts differences into deficiencies and inequalities, and thereby necessitates integration support to re-establish parity of participation. Through social stratification, different groups of people will have varying needs for integration support and varying access to support as well. Contingent citizenship also means that those who need support the most do not get it, or at least they do not get it when they need it the most. In the context of migration, citizenship contingency effectively turns most ordinary migrants into full market citizens (*homo-economicus*) without a social citizenship recourse for de-commodification. Integration is necessary for de-commodification. However, as migrants lack access to national citizenship rights such as welfare support, their integration is limited to economic integration. Economic integration is, however, heavily marketized, channelled through the labour market, and shaped by unequal and hierarchical market mechanisms that embed historical socio-cultural and political differences between people and even nations.

Migrants' 'otherness' in the host country, and employers' weaponization and exploitation of those differences, pits migrants against citizens, undermining their integration in the host country working class. This in turn excludes them from industrial citizenship rights and benefits such as solidarity-based power and union participation, reinforcing adverse impacts of market citizenship.

In the end, economic citizenship proves overly marketized and limited in its ability to de-commodify migrants and eliminate inequalities and class differences, including in the labour market, as citizenship ought to do. In the labour market, economic citizenship institutes and legitimises political and socio-cultural differences that become the basis for unequal and discriminative labour market practices such as labour market segmentation. From a citizenship point of view, economic citizenship is a misnomer category that should be problematised not only in theory but also in practice.

Authorship: I co-wrote the paper with Professor Nathan Lillie, my main PhD supervisor and first author. Professor Lillie was invited to contribute a book chapter on citizenship and migration for a handbook on the same topic while working on the Horizon 2020 project SIRIUS (skills and labour market integration of migrants in European union labour markets – in full) in January 2020. I had just joined Professor Lillie in the SIRIUS project as a project researcher at that time and we began working on the chapter in January 2020. We approached writing the chapter as a learning process where Professor Lillie, as both my supervisor and an established industrial relations scholar, led the writing process and is therefore the first author. The workload was shared as follows: we both conducted literature reviews for the chapter. I conceptualised the paper and designed the chapter outline which we implemented through a collaborative writing process. For the first draft we divided tasks such that I wrote the introduction, portions on market citizenship, temporary migration, and earning citizenship through integration. Professor Lillie conceptualised Polanyi's economic dualism as the basis for the tensions inherent in economic citizenship and wrote the industrial citizenship sections. After the first draft, we edited and improved the manuscript in turns until the manuscript was ready for submission. We used the same approach of writing in turns to revise the manuscript according to reviewer comments in two review cycles.

The second paper titled "*Staying because of all odds: Lived experiences of African student migrants in Finland*" (Ndomo, 2020) is an empirical paper that characterises the economic and social integration of a group of migrants in Finland based on narratives of lived experiences. It aims at understanding both structural and systemic factors shaping migrant integration and therefore identifies varied integration stakeholders and the impact of their actions on migrants' integration decisions and outcomes.

The analysis in this article casts a wide net, characterising a variety of integration issues participants confronted as they established their lives in Finland. An economic integration analysis focused on participants' perceptions of their work and employment as well as the social status attached to their labour market position in Finland. A social integration analysis focused on day-to-day

pursuit of community belonging as defined in interview narratives. By inquiring about the jobs participants did in Finland, I found that most concentrated in a particular job type irrespective of differences in their professional interests, qualifications, and work experience. The article identifies that participants' labour market position in Finland is more ascribed than acquired or earned, based on labour market competences as neoclassical economics and (ideal) economic citizenship principles promise. The labour market position ascribed to participants is predominantly marginal and peripheral, bound to the secondary sector where participants worked in typically low skill, labour intensive jobs such as cleaning and newspaper delivery. Social integration as belonging or being perceived and treated as a legitimate part of society by relevant institutions, organisations, and the public in Finland is extremely poor. These findings introduced a sharp contradiction, as belonging was a key migration objective for participants.

Analysis found that participants felt excluded from participation in various socio-cultural domains of society, and they had to forge alternative approaches to communal life such as integrating in migrant communities. Analysis also established a link between longer stays in Finland to poorer integration outcomes. Poor economic and social integration outcomes were shown to prolong the integration process, and resulted in longer stays as participants persisted in attempts to 'purchase' validity and acceptance through participation. Since participant engagement with Finnish society was largely limited to the economic domain, progression to full inclusion in society was very slow and uncertain. The analysis also identified the variety of stakeholders involved in the migrant integration process.

A composite narrative-based map of the integration trajectory of participants revealed a list of stakeholders with significant influence over the migrant integration process in Finland. Analysis of stakeholders revealed fundamental intersections and links between the strategies of varied actors such as the link between the actions of employers in need of flexible labour and the designers and regulators of the student legal status regime. Based on this, a key finding was that participants' integration outcomes are predominantly a product of structural and institutional migration management strategies and migration utility perspectives of various actors in Finland. This finding emerges as a central insight for the entire dissertation and is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this summary article. Regarding participants' labour market position, the analysis found a pattern of occupational concentration strong enough to signify labour market segmentation. The nature of labour market segmentation is probed further in the third and fourth dissertation articles.

Authorship: The article is sole authored, and I developed the concept, designed the study, collected the data used in the study and carried out the analysis in 2019 and 2020. Concept development for the second article and production of its first draft preceded the first paper as these were done in 2019, however, writing of both articles overlapped in 2020. This is evident in the complexity with which I handle the concept of citizenship in paper two. Paper

two continues the research I began in master's thesis and used data collected for that purpose, although I added three more interviews to the MA data pool. The earliest manuscript of paper two was presented at an international conference on border studies and was later published in a volume edited by conference conveners Jussi Laine, Innocent Moyo, and Christopher Changwe Nshimbi.

The third paper titled "*Resistance is useless! (And so are resilience and reworking): Migrants in the Finnish labour market*" (Ndomo & Lillie, 2023) problematised theorisation of the role and capacity of migrant agency in the integration process using empirical evidence. Drawing on biographical work histories of 11 third country national migrants in Finland, the article analysed individual strategies that participants implemented to improve their integration in the labour market. The main argument the article contributes is that although human agency is a crucial resource in the migration and integration process, it can also play a counterintuitive role, reinforcing exclusive labour market practices and integration norms. The chapter cautions against reifying agency because it can inadvertently or advertently shift the focus of integration intervention away from the structural factors that prevent migrants from succeeding in host country labour markets; as well as institutionalising agency driven integration practices such as resilience that might be detrimental to migrants' wellbeing.

Conceptually, the chapter uses Cindi Katz's (2004) adaptation of Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) theory of agency which breaks down agency into its component parts - resilience, reworking, and resistance - to better capture the nuance and potential of human action. The chapter aims to illustrate the intricacies of agency as power, using Katz's categories to interpret the various activities migrants employ in response to labour market barriers. It also analyses how agentic actions interacted with structural barriers. The chapter also draws on labour market segmentation theories to contextualise the labour market experience of research participants.

The citizenship related concepts of inclusion, exclusion, rights, and belonging were also engaged in analysis. The article's analysis is a three-part discussion that follows participants' integration through three temporal phases: the very beginning of the integration process, the present (i.e., the time of the interview), and the future, assessed through future plans. Using Katz's agency components as action categories, we grouped and differentiated migrants' integration-oriented actions. Findings are consistent with two studies where at least one of the agency elements was used as an analytical tool in migrant integration research. Main findings according to the three agency categories are that migrants had a far greater tendency towards acts of resilience generally, attempted reworking sometimes, and were not able to stage resistance in terms of counterhegemonic opposition to structure. Migrants' acts of resilience, reworking, and attempts of resistance were not aimed at changing the structure that underlies hegemonic, discriminative, and oppressive labour market and integration practices and norms that impacted them. Additionally, they distracted integration stakeholders, including migrants themselves, and policy

actors from identifying and focusing on alleviating structural barriers to substantive economic and social integration, and were therefore counterintuitive.

Authorship: I co-authored the article, as the first author, with my PhD supervisor professor Nathan Lillie as the second author. It was based on empirical material collected for the sixth work package of the SIRIUS research project, which sought to understand individual barriers and enablers to migrant labour market integration in EU labour markets, with our team focusing on the Finnish national case only. It is published as a book chapter in a volume edited by work package leaders Irina Isaakyan, Anna Triandafillydou, and Simone Baglioni. I developed the concept for the paper and collected data with the help of three research assistants to negotiate language limitations, and did the data analysis by myself. I designed the paper and wrote the concept paper (abstract), which was approved by Professor Lillie and the book editors. I wrote the first draft, which was improved in writing turns with Professor Lillie. He did two rounds of revising and improving the manuscript before we submitted it for review. After receiving reviewer comments, we once again worked in turns to address reviewer comments until we were satisfied with the work and re-submitted. The first submission was made in 2020 September, and the final manuscript was published in December 2022.

The fourth paper titled *“Essential? COVID-19 and highly educated Africans in Finland’s segmented labour market”* (Ndomo, Bontenbal, & Lillie, 2023) had a two-part objective: characterising the position of highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market; and examining impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on that position using empirical data. The study was inspired by the pandemic and the anticipated socio-economic impacts on society, including the labour market. As the pandemic unfolded, its impacts included restructuring the labour market by disrupting labour demand and supply, as well as disrupting the prior valuation metrics of professions and occupations. The role of migrants in the newly structured labour market became unprecedentedly important, or was at least perceived so especially in countries with large numbers of migrants in the workforce. This article investigated the Finnish case, focusing on how changes that took place in the Finnish context impacted migrants’ labour market position. The article can also be seen as updating the findings of the second dissertation study on the position migrants occupy in the Finnish labour market.

The analytical argument based on data is that participants who were members of a single racial and ethnic group (Black Africans) with a high educational attainment comparable to the Finnish national average were relegated to the peripheries of the Finnish labour market irrespective of their labour market competences. In those jobs, their acts of resilience and reworking in the form of labour flexibility coincided with pandemic related labour demands to create employment and work security in a time of crisis. Theoretically, the analysis shows an anomaly in the normative operation of labour market segmentation. The third overarching research question of the dissertation is

inspired by this finding, and a theoretical explanation for it is presented in Subchapter 4.3 of this dissertation summary article.

The analytical discussion of the COVID article splits in two in line with its two-part objective. The first part establishes the position of the study group in the Finnish labour market which is shown to be in the secondary sector, and in the peripheries of the subordinate primary sector where working conditions and contract forms mimic the secondary sector. The first part of the analysis confirms and illustrates labour market segmentation, thereby extending the analysis introduced in the second dissertation article (Ndomo, 2020). Discussion of the impact of the pandemic on participants' labour market position emphasises the intersection of serendipity and systemic structuring. On serendipity, a historically segmented labour market encounters a pandemic, whose nature (a health pandemic) and the regulatory measures taken to manage it render multiple secondary sector occupations and workforce essential. This creates a normatively contradictory outcome of stability rather than redundancy in the secondary sector during a socio-economic crisis. On systemic structuring, labour flexibility enforced by structures of labour market segmentation and contingent citizenship ensured migrant workers could move across occupations to adapt to pandemic shocks in the labour market. As the worst initial phases of the pandemic concluded, it seemed that migrant workers were barely affected by the negative impacts of the pandemic in the labour market. Contrarily, they were secure, even more so than native Finnish workers in primary sector occupations. However, from the security participants enjoyed in the secondary sector, a lesson is learnt about the adverse and irrational persistence and perhaps "permanence" of segmentation lines with two clear illustrations.

During the pandemic, although the specific demand for care workers increased, research participants' experience shows that the increased labour and skill demand did not change their value or position in the labour market as their recruitment adhered to the old hierarchy of care workers. The other participants who rotated from one low-skill job to another to secure their employment or work illustrated embodiment of flexibility, resilience, and reworking that was initially demanded and enforced by segmentation practices, but at that moment individually applied as rational labour market practice.

Essentially, the article spotlights how segmentation structures in the Finnish labour market operate in a clandestine manner behind established and normatively rational institutions and systems such as the student migrant visa regime. It also highlights how some labour market success stories such as the apparent employment security of participants during the pandemic can be products of discriminative labour market norms. The article therefore problematises these superficial markers which in the case of the pandemic was the 'essential' worker.

The article also provides methodological insights for researchers and policy analysts about the commonly referenced markers of labour market integration or labour market success, including high employment rates, high wages, and low turnover. Owing to their superficial nature, these markers can be misleading and

can conceal problematic labour market structures and practices that prevent migrants from holistically succeeding in the labour market. An implication of the findings of the article is that a false interpretation of the state of migrant labour market integration can derail or hinder the social policy agenda on migrant integration all together, leaving migrants solely responsible for their integration.

Authorship: I co-wrote the article with two colleagues from Finnish research team of the SIRIUS consortium – Doctor Ilona Bontenbal, the second author, and Professor Nathan Lillie, the third author. In 2020 and 2021, I collected empirical data on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers in EU labour markets as part of the project’s seventh work package. The work package focused on lessons learnt and best practices in migrant labour market integration in the EU. All three of us co-wrote the concept note for the research, which we submitted and later presented as a panel paper at the 18th IMISCOE annual conference, within the “Immigration, Immigrants, and the Labour Market in Europe” standing committee (IILME) in July 2021. I presented the paper at the conference. I also did data collection, analysis, and wrote the first draft of the paper. After that we revised and improved the manuscript in turns. Doctor Bontenbal contributed original content on Finland's official response to the pandemic and relevant regulations in place. The paper underwent two rounds of peer review, and in both instances I addressed reviewer comments at first and the co-authors added to or improved my responses before resubmission. The article is published as part of a special issue edited by Doctor Lisa Berntsen. The paper was published in January 2023.

3 PREMISES OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 Research context

3.1.1 Key issues in migration in the Finnish context

This summarised information about migration to Finland and migrant integration helps to put the entire dissertation in context and includes background information that frames some of the discussion in Chapter 4.

Finland's conversion to a positive net migration status through the 1980s and 1990s happened in the context of three temporo-spatial realities: 1) the beginning of return migration of Finns from Sweden; 2) return migration of Ingrian Finns following the dissolution of the Soviet Union; and 3) arrival of refugees fleeing the Somali civil war (Massey et al., 1993). Up until the 1970s Finland had been an emigration country, with Finns migrating in large numbers, mainly to the United States, Australia, and Sweden.

It has been argued that Finland's history of emigration left the country unprepared for receiving and integrating migrants. That unpreparedness showed in the rudimentary approach to migrant integration adopted in the 1980s and 1990s (see Valtonen, 2001; Forsander & Trux, 2002). Migrants were treated mainly as a social burden and a problem that Finnish society needed to fix through assimilative interventions funded by the welfare system (Forsander & Trux, 2002). Finland's newness as a migrant host country relative to other OECD countries is useful to consider when analysing its approach to both migrant attraction and integration.

The migrant population in Finland comes from a handful main source countries which correspond to Finland's geographic location, national and ethno-cultural history, and Finland's unique migration history. The largest groups of migrants in Finland today are citizens of Russia, Estonia, and other former Soviet Union countries, together constituting about half of the migrant population (Statistics Finland, 2023). Many in this group are Ingrian Finns who migrated back to Finland under different migration rules because of their Finnish lineage

or heritage. In 2010, this arrangement was scrapped and the group began following the same migration rules as other migrants (see Koikkalainen et al., 2012; Koikkalainen, 2021). Other notable source countries in the top 30 are Somalia, Iraq, Vietnam, China, United States, United Kingdom, Turkey, India, and the Balkan countries among others (Official Statistics Finland, 2023).

Migration to Finland remains small in absolute and relative numbers. As of December 2021, there were some 442,399 foreign background¹ individuals living in Finland (Official Statistics Finland, 2023). Migrants made up roughly 7.9% of the Finnish national population of 5,566,812 in December 2021.

There are growing concerns over Finland's demographic balance, and particularly the rising dependency ratio² (Migration Review, 2021). A high dependency ratio, meaning more people outside the workforce than in the workforce, poses a threat to public funds and the welfare system. One of the proposed ways to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of Finland's rising dependency ratio is active migration – targeted migrant attraction, integration, and retention (ibid, see also Forsander, 2003, 2004; Heikkilä & Peltonen, 2002; Koskela, 2010).

In terms of age group distribution, the Finnish population is rather evenly dispersed. The migrant population alternatively concentrates around certain age groups. Most migrants fall in the age category of 20-54, while the 30-34 and 35-39 cohorts are the peak age groups (Statistics Finland, 2023; See Figure 1).

In the whole of Finland, every seventh person aged 30-34 was of foreign background; and one in four in the Greater Helsinki region (Statistics Finland, 2020). This means that the migrant population in Finland theoretically has a high labour market integration potential. Both labour and specific skills are urgently needed in various sectors of the Finnish labour market (Ministry of the Interior, 2024). Finland's ability to absorb labour market ready migrants into work, and to 'turn' the remaining migrants into human capital employable in the labour market, depends on its approach to, and performance in migrant integration.

¹ This number consists of individuals with a foreign background born outside of Finland, and those born in Finland. In the consulted data, 'foreignness' is determined by language so that this number refers to all individuals whose registered mother tongue, or the mother tongue registered to their parents, is neither Finnish, Swedish, nor Sami, which are the officially recognised national languages of Finland.

² This refers to the balance of the population age-group in the workforce and the population age-group outside the workforce such as children below the working age and retirees.

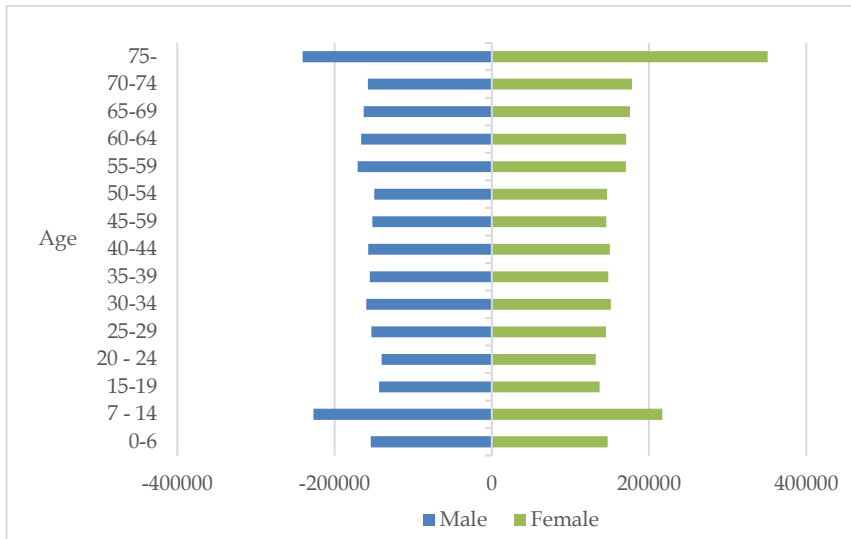


Figure 1 Age structure of Finland's population on 31 December 2022. Source: Statistics Finland: Population Structure

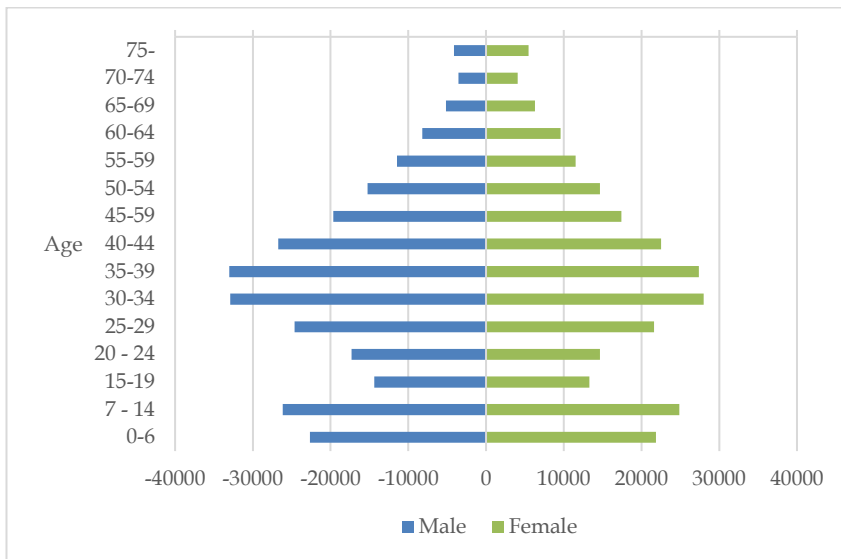


Figure 2 Age structure of Finland's foreign background population on 31 December 2022. Source: Statistics Finland: Population Structure

3.1.2 Key issues in migrant integration in the Finnish context

There are three key issues that constitute the overarching framework within which migrant integration in Finland takes place. The first is that migrant integration in Finland is heavily labour market oriented, so that integration is measured in terms of labour market success. Labour market success in this context is defined superficially in terms of employment rates and percentages (see Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). In the Finnish context, centrality of work in the Nordic welfare system where wage employment is key to full social participation is likely to emphasise migrant labour market integration further. Employment is

therefore a key integration resource (Forsander, 2004; Mäkinen, 2017). Forsander (2004) posits that a workfare over welfare ideology, reinforced by the protestant principle of independence, makes work and gainful employment a universal and shared responsibility in the Nordic welfare state. Additionally, the high cost of the universalistic Nordic welfare model is publicly financed through taxation, making it indirectly dependent on wage employment (ibid).

The second issue is the national integration policy and the approach to integration that is represented by the state sponsored official integration programme (see Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019, 2021; Koikkalainen, 2021). There is only one state sponsored integration programme that however does not serve all migrant legal status groups in Finland. The state sponsored integration programme is a three-year programme that can be extended to five years, and its primary target group is unemployed job seekers with a category A, continuous³, residence permit. Prospective participants must register as unemployed job seekers with the Employment and Economic development services (TE services) in their municipality of residence within three years of arrival in Finland to be eligible (ibid). Participants of the integration programme receive an initial assessment to establish their individual integration needs. Theoretically, the assessment is done collaboratively by the migrants and appointed TE services personnel, who also become their individual integration counsellors.

The discrete activities or services of the integration programme are language training, labour skill training, and workplace practice (ibid). Language training is the primary focus of the integration programme and takes up about two thirds of time spent in the programme. Compared to the national integration policies in most EU member states and the OECD, the Finnish integration programme is positively evaluated as comprehensive (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). It is based on coherent legislation and offers a slightly wider variety of services to a wider variety of legal migrant groups, not only refugees such as in the case of Greece and Italy (ibid; Lillie et al., 2023). It also enjoys stable funding, receiving about 2.21 percent of national GDP in 2018 to support active labour market policies (OECD Stats, 2021). Lastly, it is relatively well coordinated across administrative levels through the TE services at the local municipal level and the ministry of economic affairs and employment at the national level in collaboration with other ministries (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019; Lillie et al., 2023).

However, empirical studies have shown significant shortcomings in translating the strong features of the integration programme from theory into practice (see Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019; Isaakyan & Baglioni, 2020). In practice, the programme divides migrants into those with ascribed access rights and those

³ The three main residence permit categories according to migri.fi are B, A, and P. B is a temporary fixed term permit category typically given to international student until April 2022 when some changes were made to this. The A category consists of what [migri](https://migri.fi) terms continuous residence permits e.g., a 4 year permit given typically to working migrants with a long term employment contract. But it also includes some fixed term residence permits, such as 1 year permits for workers, family migrants etc. The difference between continuous and fixed term is ambiguous. Lastly, P is for a permanent residence status that both EU and third country nationals can be eligible for in Finland. More information: <https://migri.fi/en/residence-permit-types>

without, along legal status lines, and other conditions. While the state sponsored integration programme is comprehensive in terms of what it covers in theory, the reality is different. Its rigid eligibility conditions - a category A residence permit plus a registered unemployed job seeker status plus under three years of residence in Finland - excludes many migrants within the theoretically eligible status groups.

For instance, student migrants are legally ineligible for the integration programme even though most of them, especially third country nationals, enter the labour market during their studies (see Maury, 2017; Könönen, 2019; Ndomo, 2020). Third country nationals are more likely to work through their studies, as their legal status excludes them from any studies-related financial support and other welfare support entitlements based on national citizenship. Most migrants with a student migration background are permanently locked out of the integration programme by design. By the time most students graduate and change their legal status to the eligible A permit, the three-year eligibility time span is often expired. Moreover, an eligibility condition for a category A permit is employment, meaning that a graduate student would only switch to an A permit by securing an employment contract, at which point they would no longer be unemployed job seekers eligible for the integration programme (ibid).

Similarly, employed migrants are also excluded from the integration programme, including underemployed individuals in professionally inferior positions that are incompatible with their qualifications. Underemployed professionals should unambivalently be one of the target recipients of integration resources such as Finnish language courses to improve their integration opportunities (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). Exclusion of employed migrants highlights the superficial and limited perception of economic integration in Finnish migrant integration policy. Economic integration is reduced to mere employment while disregarding other features of economic integration such occupational growth, employment security, and socio-economic security (see Lillie & Ndomo, 2021).

There have been concerns and arguments especially from migrants that the integration programme, in conjunction with TE services, 'direct' their service recipients toward specific occupations (ibid). Integration administrators interpret what migrants consider coercive differently, arguing that they can only help migrants integrate into jobs and occupations with a demand (Lillie et al., 2023 pg.65-66). Whatever the rationality behind their actions, integration personnel of TE Services, vocational training institutions, or guidance counsellors at secondary schools play a significant role in shaping the Finnish migrant labour market.

The third and last issue is the cultural structure of Finnish society. Finnish homogeneity is abundantly invoked in migration literature as a source of weakness in reference to migrant integration and diversity management (see e.g., Pitkänen & Kouki, 2002; c.f., Raento & Husso, 2002, Penninx, Spencer, & Hear, 2008). This underscores its relevance for the discussion herein. Forsander (2004) explains that Finnish nationalism is based on a myth of a common ethnicity

which encourages a strong in-group identity. This is perhaps worsened by the fact that Finland finds itself in the centre of Hollifield's liberal paradox: needing to open up to migration, and close up at the same time (see Thomsen & Jørgensen, 2013). That identity pits Finnish people as the insider 'us' group against others, as the outsider 'them', initiating ethnic stratification (Heikkilä, 2005; see also Anderson, 2013).

Cultural proximity, a variation of the homogeneity rhetoric prevalent in Finnish migrant integration discourse, further differentiates the outsider 'them' group of migrants, producing a nuanced ethnicity hierarchy that is used to value migrants differently (see Jaakkola 2000; Heikkilä, 2005; Koskela, 2014; Ahmad, 2020b). In the apparent ethnic hierarchy, racially white citizens of the Nordic countries, the United States, UK, Australia, and Canada are at the most favourable end, followed by other Europeans, while Black Africans occupy the bottom spot (ibid; Ahmad, 2020 b). The ethnicity hierarchy implies that at the starting point of the integration process different migrant groups are destined to face different integration barriers and enablers.

3.1.3 Summary of key characteristics of the Finnish labour market

Unlike labour markets in many of the traditional migrant-receiving OECD countries such as the US, UK, Germany, and France, the Finnish labour market has a high employment threshold that undermines incorporation of migrants into the labour market (Forsander, 2003, 2002). What this means is that Finland does not have the typical massive low skill and low wage industry through which migrants (the majority of whom are assumed to have low skills and low demands of employment conditions and wages) enter the host country labour market (Piore, 1979; Paananen, 1999; Walia, 2010). High wages, thanks to a strictly regulated, highly organised labour market that is nearly universally covered by collective agreements, raise production costs (Böckerman & Uusitalo, 2006; Bergholm & Bieler, 2013). High production costs lead employers to seek high productivity to make profits, which disincentivises labour-intensive production methods that typically rely on low skilled migrant labour in large numbers (Piore, 1979; see also Forde & MacKenzie, 2009). Additionally, the educational attainment level of the general Finnish population is very high, and on average exceeds that of the immigrant population (Jaakkola, 2000; Sahlberg, 2009; Habti & Koikkalainen, 2014; Schwab, 2018). Women's labour market participation is also among the highest in the world (Anxo et al., 2007; Grönlund et al., 2017). It should, however, be noted that comparisons of educational attainment between migrants and the Finnish national population cannot be reliable as there is still no system to comprehensively collate migrants' foreign educational attainment (see also Heikkilä & Jarvinen, 2003).

However, some segments of the Finnish labour market, such as the bottom tier of the service sector, construction, metal, etc., are labour-intensive and often do not demand high educational qualifications of labour. These productive labour market segments also happen to be territorially bound to Finland because of the nature of production such as in the case of ship building or geriatric care.

Sometimes, their product or service market is strictly domestic. Additionally, the Finnish service sector is a substantial labour market actor that covers several industries and occupational clusters, contributes a significant percentage of the gross national income, and employs a significant number of the Finnish workforce. Therefore, service sector jobs that have the potential to undermine the structural and operational arrangement, norms, and boundaries of the Finnish labour market such as low-skill and labour intensives jobs cannot be eliminated through for example offshoring (see Lillie, 2012). I argue that these jobs create an anomaly in the Finnish labour market that becomes a starting point for a differential distribution of workers based on legal status, nationality, and ethnicity, among others. Ultimately, segmentation of the Finnish labour market appears to result from the dynamic and evolving structure of the Finnish labour market itself – the service sector specifically.

3.2 Previous research and finding my niche

3.2.1 State of the art: Migrant integration in the Finnish labour market

Penninx et al. (2008), in a review of the state of the art of migration and integration in Europe, identified that until the 2000s, migration and integration studies tended to be narrowly focused. Studies emphasized a single issue, discipline, demographic, or geography at a time (ibid). The literature analysis that follows reflects this, as it focuses predominantly on research done in and for the Finnish context. But first, a clarification on what ‘integration’ means in this research. My conceptualisation of migrant integration draws on Penninx (2019) and theories that combine concepts of migration and citizenship. Penninx (2019) sees integration as a broad scientific heuristic for questioning and analysing the processes of interaction between newcomers and host societies. The interactions that bring about integration happen at an individual, collective, and institutional level, and encompass a further three dimensions: legal, socio-economic, and cultural (ibid). In my definition of integration, the legal dimension is further developed with insights from studies of citizenship rights such as Somers (2008) and Anderson (2013). Additionally, the host society is seen through Anderson’s notion of community of value. In this research, the community of value is the labour market.

Migrant labour market integration in Finland has been widely studied from multiple perspectives, often investigating multiple factors and processes shaping the ability of different migrant groups to access and leverage labour market opportunities on par with the ethnic Finnish population. A theme that cuts across the existing literature is the position that migrants occupy in the Finnish labour market. It has mainly been looked at in terms of the jobs that migrants can access. Aside from four relatively recent studies I could find, the productive capacity or role of the multiple factors, structural and personal, that are documented as shaping migrants’ labour market integration remains underexplored.

Discussions of migrants' labour market position in Finland concentrate around three intersecting themes: discrimination, ethnicity, and difference. There is consensus on two characterisations of migrant integration in the Finnish labour market. The first is that migrant labour market integration is largely unsuccessful due to a variety of structural, institutional, and personal barriers to integration that outnumber existing enablers (see empirical illustrations in Valtonen, 2001; Forsander, 2002, 2003, 2004; Heikkilä, 2005; 2017; Koskela, 2010, 2014; Koikkalainen et al., 2012; Komulainen, 2013; Näre 2013; Laurén & Wrede, 2008; Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019; Ahmad, 2020 a, b). The second consensus is that the greatest barrier that migrants come up against in their integration efforts is race and ethnicity-based discrimination.

Focusing her analysis on the role of employers in shaping migrant labour market integration, Kathleen Valtonen in a 2001 article characterises the monopoly-like exclusion strategies and conditions of Finnish employers and society that cut migrants out of the Finnish labour market in the 1990s. Further, she argues that the same strategies later directed migrants to the secondary sector of the Finnish labour market (*ibid*). The objective was to secure opportunities for ethnic Finns first (*ibid*). Misfocused migrant integration programmes inadequately prepared migrants for the labour market, while sometimes, outright discriminatory strategies such as exaggerated Finnish language proficiency demands favoured Finnish workers at the expense migrant workers.

Continuing from where Valtonen (2001) left off, Forsander and Trux (2002) attribute migrants' poor labour market integration to the philosophically assimilative strategy Finland adopted for integrating migrants in the 1980s (see also Castles, 1995). Migrants at the time, typically refugees, were seen as a social problem to be fixed through social welfare provisions. An assimilative outlook meant that integration programmes focused insufficiently on migrants' labour market potential and labour market activation. The result of this was poor labour market participation (Forsander & Trux, 2002).

Forsander (2003) characterises migrants in the Finnish labour market as 'insider outsiders' whose integration is characterised by both exclusion and inclusion. As some opportunities are extended to migrants in Finland, others are denied at the same time. Forsander carried out an empirical analysis of varied features of migrants' employment, such as contracts, career stability, income and more, to determine migrants' positions in the Finnish labour market (*ibid*). She argued that migrants are marginalised in the Finnish labour market by poor contract terms, unstable careers, and irregular and insufficient incomes, among others, because of labour market structuring. Many migrants who were unable to sustain a life on their irregular incomes became dependent on welfare. Similar arguments are made in Valtonen (2001) and Forsander and Trux (2002).

However, Forsander (2003) also finds that migrant nationality was the strongest variable shaping career outcomes, and that migrants from 'developing countries' were the most unfavourably affected while 'Westerners' were most favourably affected. For instance, she found that educational qualifications were valued depending on the country of origin, and that locally acquired education

was the most valued (ibid). On the latter, Alitolppa and Niitamo (2002) had similar findings. They noted that migrants who undergo educational training in Finland, in addition to educational qualifications, acquire cultural competence during their residency and develop a Finnish social network that can be leveraged during a job search (ibid).

Ahmad's (2020 b) empirical analysis of returns on locally acquired education for migrants in the labour market found, however, that an ethnic hierarchy results in differential returns for different migrants (see also Könönen & Himanen, 2019; c.f., Liebkind, Larja, & Brylka, 2016). This study was, however, limited to low to medium-skilled migrants; nonetheless, the finding challenges the general assertion by both Forsander (2003) and Alitolppa and Niitamo (2002) by showing that locally acquired education does not necessarily improve employability for all migrants in the same way (see also Majakulma, 2011; Shumilova, Cai, & Pekkola, 2012).

Underemployment is also common among migrant graduates, including those educated in Finland (Chang & Holm, 2017; Yeasmine & Koivurova, 2019; Alho, 2020; Maury, 2020, 2022). The value attributed to a migrant worker as well as their qualifications rests with whoever is in control of a labour market opportunity. Ahmad's analysis underscores the fact that the body carrying the qualifications and skills has a greater impact on the value of the qualifications (Ahmad, 2020a, b). Earlier, Pitkänen (2008) had bluntly illustrated that the most valued migrants were those that benefited Finnish society both materially and intellectually but also resembled the native Finn as much as possible (p. 37).

A prejudicial attitude is not only held by employers but also the general Finnish population that favours a strict selection of migrants to get the most socio-economic benefit out of migration (c.f., Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015; Heath & Richards, 2019). In her population attitude survey findings, Jaakkola (2000, 2009) explains that Finnish people understand the need for migrant labour and want migrant workers to come to Finland, but not from anywhere. Näre (2013) references an empirical example of care centre clientele influencing service provider's employee selection with their prejudicial attitudes for and against some workers (see also Vartiainen, et al., 2016; c.f. Fernández-Reino et al., 2022).

Two strands of migrant hierarchies that are also closely intertwined and sometimes overlapping are documented in literature: ethnicity and nationality-based stratification, and stratification by socio-economic desirability in terms of the wanted and unwanted migrant. Here the focus is on the migrants' economic value: their labour and skills and contribution to sustaining the welfare state. Valuation places migrants in additional two groups according to their perceived goodness for the economy or the economic burden they present. While Jaakkola's 2009 study (based on 2007 data) showed more Finnish people were open to migration of workers, studies in the proceeding period recorded a rise in the general anti-immigration sentiment among Finns (Elonen, 2010). This however could have been a reflection the negative economic impacts of the 2008 recession.

The ethnicity-based hierarchisation focuses on the perceived value addition of different migrant groups for the host country versus their socio-economic burden, as well as alignment of migration with Finland's commitment to international laws, agreements, and responsibility (see Paananen, 1999; Jaakkola, 2000; Forsander, 2004; Koskela, 2014). At the top of the nationality and ethno-cultural classification are the 'Westerners' from the North America and the rest of Europe. Of the westerners, white American, British, and Scandinavian citizens fall practically at the same valuation level as Finnish citizens (see discussion in Koskela, 2014).

At the bottom of the ethno-cultural and nationality hierarchy are Middle Easterners and Africans – both North and sub-Saharan Africans. Unlike white Americans, for example, their difference is not valorised as good diversity that can add value to Finnish society. Their difference is seen as a deficit; a negative deviance that sets them apart from the common ethnicity norm-base, and therefore makes them the 'other'. Forsander (2004) explains that their admission into the Finnish community of value as equal members is largely a futile endeavour as it depends on their ability to overcome their 'un-Finnishness' or norm-base deficit. Using language for illustration, Forsander posits that overcoming the Finnishness deficit would require migrants to speak the Finnish language without an accent, with native level fluency; something that is simply impossible at least for first generation migrants (Laurén & Wrede, 2008). The Finnishness deficit endures beyond the first generation of migrants as it also pertains to ethno-cultural markers such as skin colour that are immutable. An ethnic name as a cultural relic, or a religious marker such as a head scarf can also be interpreted as a Finnishness deficit (Forsander, 2004; see also Ahmad, 2020; c.f. Fernández-Reino et al., 2022).

Many studies have established that migrants tend to concentrate in elementary occupations, and that the distribution of different migrant groups across the elementary occupations reflects the ethnic and gender hierarchies in place (see e.g., Valtonen, 2001; Forsander 2002; Hekkilä, 2005; 2017; Wahlbeck, 2007; Salmenhaara, 2008; Komulainen, 2013; Ollus, 2016; Maury, 2017). Komulainen (2013) establishes that migrants tend to concentrate in low-skilled and medium-skilled sectors of the labour market if they are not completely unemployed. Heikkilä (2017), draws on Statistics Finland data to compare employed migrants and ethnic Finns by profession, across 11 occupational groups. Of all professional groups, the biggest disparity is recorded between Finnish men and migrant men in elementary occupations such as cleaners and helpers, and labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing, and transport. In other words, a disproportionate share of elementary tasks being performed by men are being performed by migrant men. However, compared to both Finnish women and migrant men, migrant women were most concentrated in elementary occupations (See Figure 3 and 4).

Salmenhaara (2008) attributes migrants' concentration in certain occupations such as those in services to a shift in the old division of labour

between women and men to a division between migrants and nationals. What used to be women's jobs now have become migrants' jobs.

Finnish language deficit is a widely discussed hinderance to migrant labour market integration in Finland, and most studies of labour market integration highlight this (See e.g., Valtonen, 2001; Heikkilä, 2005; Forsander, 2004; Peltonen, 2002). However, the extent to which migrants' Finnish language deficiency presents legitimate hinderance to their ability to perform in various tasks and positions in the Finnish labour market is contested. Some studies have implied that Finnish employers have likely weaponised Finnish language proficiency requirement in recruitment to keep migrants out of some positions and sectors of the labour market generally. Ahmad's (2020) experimental study of employers' biases against migrant job applicants showed that Finnish language proficiency did not improve participants' employability. Laurén & Wrede (2008), Näre (2013), and Vartiainen et al. (2016) all question the segregation of nurses in Finnish healthcare based on the language criteria. Valtonen (2001) on the other hand argues unambiguously that Finnish employers have used Finnish language proficiency as a tool of exclusion with monopolistic outcomes in job distribution to the detriment of migrant workers.

Taking on a slightly different perspective in another study, Forsander (2004) links migrants poor labour market integration or exclusion to limits that are specific to the social democratic welfare state's inability to include culturally diverse populations. She argues that the universalism of the Nordic welfare system elicited and reinforced a strong homogenous norm base that in turn reinforced exclusivity and made integration of migrants more difficult (*ibid.*). Forsander (2004) argues that the homogeneous norm penetrates the welfare system and all domains of society, demanding ethnocultural conformity and similarity in society. The outcome is a weaker ability to adapt to diversity structurally and socially.

In the end, migrant integration in a Nordic welfare society does not appear to always to be built on the principles of universality or result in egalitarian access and distribution of rights and benefits. Rather, it upholds and entrenches differences between the insider group and the outsider 'other'. With the goal of protecting the welfare system, strict selectivity enforced through, for example, legal status tools, creates very tight conditions of integration (see discussion on welfare magnet in Borjas, 1999). This argument converges with Valtonen (2001), and Forsander and Trux (2002), who at the time posited that migrants who managed to gain admission into Finland were turned into social projects. Migrants were 'delaborised' through social assimilation-oriented integration programmes that in the end hindered their labour market participation (*c.f.*, discussion on the Danish context in Necef, 2000 as cited in Forsander 2002). It should be noted that in this arrangement, integration responsibility passes to the migrant after, for example, the end of an integration programme. According to Jørgensen & Thomsen (2016), the tendency to transfer integration responsibility squarely onto migrants is also a feature of the self-sufficiency principle of the Nordic welfare system.

A recent and fundamental study by Ahmad (2020a) sums up the literature on the migrant labour market position in Finland. Ahmad (2020a) is a correspondence-based experiment that investigated ethnicity-based discrimination in recruitment in the Finnish labour market. The study found strong evidence that Finnish employers were ethnically biased, most in favour of Ethnic Finns and least in favour of Somali job applicants with identical labour market competences and qualifications for a job (ibid). An ethnic hierarchy appears to supersede meritocracy in valuation of labour and distribution of employment and occupational growth opportunities. Since applicants had locally acquired qualifications and citizenship, the analysis implies that the position of second-generation migrants in the Finnish labour market resembles that of first-generation migrants.

Although the studies I have reviewed so far have covered a wide range of factors that shape the position migrants occupy in the Finnish labour market, they neglect a critical engagement with the processes of social production that result in the integration outcomes they characterise. This is the research gap that this dissertation contributes to.

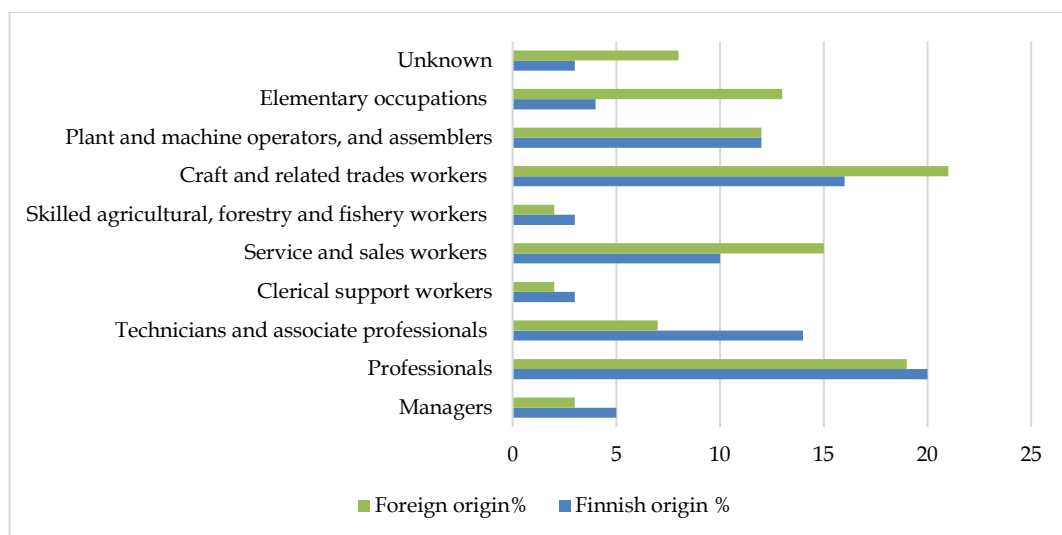


Figure 3: Number of employed Finnish men (n=1199161) and foreign men (n=111859) by occupational group in 2021. Source: Statistics Finland

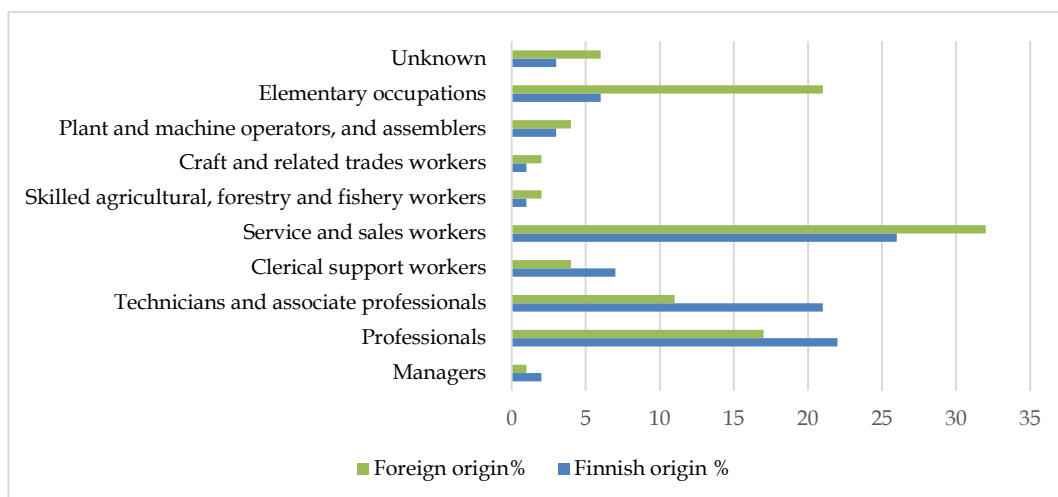


Figure 4: Number of employed Finnish women (n=1177965) and foreign women (n=85395) by occupational group in 2021. Source: Statistics Finland

3.2.2 Finding my niche

As the literature review above illustrates, migrants' labour market integration and position in Finland has been studied widely, such that it is general knowledge that migrants occupy a marginal position in the Finnish labour market. However, that general conclusion elicits a number of questions that can be pursued through further research. I will focus on two.

The first question has to do with differentiating between migrant groups. Jaakkola (2000; 2009) and Ahmad (2020 b) establish the existence of an ethnic hierarchy that differentiates the integration experiences and outcomes of different migrant groups. This creates room for varied kinds of studies that focus on specific migrant groups. Such groups can be defined by ethnicity, nationality, race and other identity markers, or some configuration of two or more group markers.

The second question concerns the processes that produce the 'facts' that shape migrant integration processes. In the literature reviewed above, the different social, cultural, and legal positions with which migrants come to the integration 'table' are taken for granted as self-evident 'truths' or essential realities that do not need contesting (see Lindo, 2005). This is not to say that the research is not critical, as many of the studies are. However, an analytical focus on the productive processes that 'create' the integration conditions and realities researchers find themselves analysing was lacking except in the following four studies: Näre 2013; Maury (2017), Martin & Prokkola, 2017; and Könönen (2019). These four studies expanded the analytical field of migrant labour market participation addressed in the extant literature by focusing on the productive function of socio-culturally and legally constructed differences.

Näre (2013) explores how difference is produced between care workers through complicated politics of recognition, resulting in a division of care labour that is not meritocratic or fair. Maury (2017) focuses on how the student legal status helps to construct a low-cost labour force and fragmented lives, out of

students, with the help of the multiplied and invasive internal border mechanisms of the Finnish state. Martin and Prokkola (2017) focus their analysis on how labour categories are differentiated and multiplied through mobility and territorialisation of borders. They show how employers and contractors manipulate legal and regulatory loopholes to segment the labour market, and how they produce and multiply labour through differential inclusion and exclusion. Contractors, companies, and employers manage to attribute different terms of employment and working conditions to people doing the same work in the same spaces, making the same work more precarious for some workers than others. Lastly, Könönen (2019) analyses the juridical division of labour resulting from how different legal statuses condition the employment choices migrants can make, with the legal status replacing the country of origin as migrants' frame of reference.

This literature review together with the findings of the four dissertation articles that constitute this dissertation provide the empirical context for the discussion chapter of this summary article – Chapter 4. With a focus on the productive capacity of the varied institutional structures that shape migrants' integration processes, I unpack the structural and personal processes of integration that determine the differential inclusion and subordination of highly educated and skilled third country national migrants in the Finnish labour market. The discussion is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) **What is the position that highly educated third country national migrants occupy in the Finnish labour market?**
- 2) **What are the structural and personal factors shaping that position?**
- 3) **Why are they in that position?**

3.3 Methodology

Research as a scientific knowledge gathering or knowledge co-creation endeavour is philosophically grounded. Varied philosophical paradigms and world views inform fundamentally different stances and approaches to the research process. In this subsection, I go through my philosophical assumptions as a social scientist and delve into the methodological details of my doctoral research.

3.3.1 Philosophical foundation

I take off from the ontological assumption of multiplicity of reality, which allows an interpretive stance in research and emphasizes the primacy of individual experience as narrated, subjective, and historically couched. Therefore, experiences of individuals are seen as one of many possible lenses into phenomena (see Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Consistent with the ontological assumption of multiple realities, I draw on epistemologies that allow and support

a close relationship between the researcher and research participants (see Gergen, 1996). A grounding assumption is that good practice in interpreting other people's experiences begins with their perspectives, narratives, stories, and representations of their own experiences. On axiology, my assumption is that researchers are value laden and historically situated individuals with consequential biographical social positions and statuses that they carry into research (ibid). As such, I believe in research methodologies that acknowledge researcher's positionality and allow researchers to bring themselves wholly into their research, pursuant to standard and discipline specific research ethics.

My ideal research methods embody the above philosophical stances and confer primacy to meaning making and interpretation as objectives of research and are therefore typically qualitative (see Creswell & Poth, 2016). In terms of rhetoric, my qualitative research methods of choice must reflect the ontological assumption of plural realities and deviate from the essentialist and deterministic rhetoric of positivist science. Terminology and rhetorical labels are chosen carefully to uphold the credibility of the study and the philosophical assumptions at its foundation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.3.1.1 A social justice world view and a mix of paradigms

As a matter of principle, I have chosen to do research as social justice advocacy. Therefore, a social justice orientation underlies my approach to research and informs my research agenda, the demographics I focus on, the kind of research impact I aim for, and the way that I carry myself in the research process, from data collection, to analysis, to presentation of findings (see Ndomo, 2022). In practice, my social justice considerations precede my methodological and research design choices. This social justice world view or paradigm fits very well with existing philosophical assumptions on ontology, epistemology, methodology, axiology, and rhetoric as I have summarised in the section above (see also Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina 2006; Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

In my research processes, a social justice world view ensured the following: 1) that research aimed to achieve some aspect of social change; 2) that research engaged demographics at the margins of society, or at the lower ranks of the social status hierarchy; 3) that research participants were treated respectfully and were engaged cooperatively and equitably throughout the research process as much as possible; and 4) that the research process itself, especially the data collection phase, is a social change intervention - more on this in subsection 3.3.2 (see also discussions in Fassinger & Morrow, 2013, p. 70; Hytten & Bettez, 2011).

Social justice as a theoretical concept or practical term is notoriously ambiguous (see e.g., Rawls, 1971; Hytten & Bettez, 2011; and discussion in Atkins, 2019); therefore, I attempt here to explain what social justice means to me to clarify how it shapes my research. What social justice means to me reflects and is determined by who I am. I was born a Black girl in a 'third world' African country to working class parents who belonged to a politically marginalised ethnic community that is paternalistic in structure. Marginality characterised me then

and characterises me today, in that I am a Black migrant woman, perfectly commodified and precarious, as I depend every day on my labour capacity to negotiate a space of belonging in my host country, Finland.

Class and status or the politics of class and the politics of recognition define people and assign privilege or injury depending on the economic structure and the cultural status order prevailing in society (see Fraser, 1998). Drawing on Fraser (1998) and Rawls (1971), I understand social justice as a condition or circumstance that promotes fairness and participatory parity. Drawing on Fraser (1998) and Somers (2008), and focusing on participatory parity, the pillars of social justice are democratic distribution and redistribution, and (full) recognition or the right to have rights. Based on this definition, I operationalise social justice advocacy as identifying and drawing attention to the various ways that societal structures systemically misrecognise and fail to democratically distribute and redistribute opportunities to the detriment of some groups of people. In my doctoral research, my agenda was to attempt to draw attention to, and problematise hegemonic power structures that sustain unequal class structures and status hierarchies, which produce privilege for some, and injustice for others.

The social injustice of unfair distribution of resources is the primary agenda of my doctoral research. My research engages injustices such as discrimination in segmented labour markets, misrecognition, oppression, suppression, commodification of people into labour and pure market citizens, and misrepresentation, among others.

In the context of scientific research, social justice as a worldview aligns most neatly with the advocacy and participatory paradigm (see elaboration of each in Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Usher et al., 1997). In the advocacy and participatory worldview, research agendas are interventionist. This means that the research process not only seeks to understand, but implements social change, thereby going a step further than simply generating knowledge for the sake of science, as is common in scientific inquiry (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Fraser et al., 2009). As such, advocacy and participation-oriented research typically have an action agenda and aim at empowerment and emancipatory ends (ibid; Usher et al., 1997). Additionally, such research engages marginalised demographics. In terms of concrete research objectives, such research attends to power relations of oppression, alienation, and suppression, relations that determine and sustain the position of marginality for some in society. Participatory action research is the main research method allied with this paradigm. I adapted the key assumptions of social justice and advocacy and participatory worldviews to my research context as explained in detail in the following paragraphs.

The constructivist worldview or paradigm, and social constructionism in particular, matched very well with my doctoral research project at the level of philosophical assumption and practicality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1996). Both my ontological and epistemological beliefs lend themselves to the constructivist worldview that there is not a single reality or truth 'out there' to be found, but rather that multiple relative truths are co-constructed in interactions

between people such as researchers and research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Constructivist assumptions further embed social justice principles such as fairness, democracy, and recognition of difference. This makes it a suitable addition to my research design. Moreover, constructivist research methods and practices such as face to face interviews demand less monetary and human resources to implement. Interviewing is not overly technical; with a long history and widespread use in society generally, and in the social sciences especially, most people can conduct and participate in interviews (see Fontana & Frey, 2005).

The constructivist world view is also like a two-sided coin, with interpretivism on the other side of the coin (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 1998). Interpretivism as a framework guiding meaning making in research shares many assumptions with the constructivist world view. It foregrounds plurality of perspectives and upholds that researchers can only construct meanings out of the meanings that research participants already constructed for the purpose of sharing. Similarly, audiences that interact with research outputs bring their unique habitus, social positions, and histories into those interactions to draw their own meanings and conclusions. Therefore, interventionist research involving vulnerable or marginalised populations must acknowledge the interpretive nature of research and develop strategies for managing research outcomes and impact on participants.

In the end, my research draws on advocacy, participatory and constructivist paradigms, and an interpretive framework to meaning making, all under the umbrella worldview of social justice. Assumptions of each paradigm are incorporated into different phases of the research process, from identification of the research topic to the presentation of findings, as well as this summary article.

3.3.1.2 Research methods, tools, and techniques

I used qualitative research methods throughout this research, including in the three individual empirical sub-studies and this summary article. Qualitative methods were selected as they matched my philosophical assumptions and worldview, and especially because they use interactive modes of inquiry. Specific research methods, tools, and techniques were selected based on their suitability to uphold the four social justice objectives of initiating social change, engaging, and reaching marginalised populations, treating research participants with respect, and triggering social change at every stage of the research process (see Subchapter 3.3.1.1).

For data collection and analysis, my goal was to immerse myself in the research process (within standard ethical limits) and use my biographical privilege as a migrant in Finland in the research. Flexibility and room for iteration in the research process were important considerations. Additionally, inquiry in the individual studies and in this summary article drew on theory to inform research questions, participant sampling, and analysis to varying degrees.

I used the biographical narrative tool in data collection in two studies, and a modified version of the in-depth qualitative interview tool in one study. In all three empirical studies, data analysis followed a data driven thematic analysis

technique. However, in two studies I incorporated Denzin's (1989) turning points and epiphanies in the coding stage, while in one paper I drew on Riessman (2008), Clarke, Brown, and Hayfield (2015), Corbin and Strauss (2018), and Creswell and Poth (2016) to develop an adapted content driven analysis approach. The data collection process and analysis processes are explained in detail below.

3.3.2 The process of collecting empirical data

My main data collection tool was the interview, for several reasons. For instance, my primary interest was to collect elaborate stories and narratives on the labour market experiences of migrants, which could be gathered through interviews. Interviews also allow a degree of flexibility and iteration in the data collection process because of the conversational nature of qualitative interview techniques, for example, semi-structured in-depth interviewing (see Kvale, 1994; Warren, 2002). On iteration, sequential one-on-one interviews allow the researcher room to improve the whole interview process, from revising the interviewing protocol to improving the researcher's own communication methods based on prior interviews (ibid).

I varied my interviewing techniques in the three studies to diversify collected data because I was not able to use multiple data collection methods. Data for the first study was collected through semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews with individual research participants, and the interviews were conducted before the beginning of my doctoral studies. The interview protocol was designed to elicit narratives of participants' labour market experiences. In the remaining two studies, I used the biographical narrative interview tool, drawing on Adam Mrozowicki's (2011) three-phased biographical interview framework. The biographical interviewing method was favoured for its ability to capture data that is longitudinal in nature and covers the three temporal dimensions: past, present, and future. The intersectional relationship between the past, present, and future is crucial in a study based on (narrated) lived experience, thus making the biographical interview an appropriate tool for my research. In concrete terms, biographical life histories cover time related details that are specifically impactful for understanding migrant decision making, such as age, stage in the life-course, the degree of transiency embedded in temporary migration regimes, and transnationality.

The biographical approach also aligns well with the social justice worldview, especially in the way it shifts the location of power in the research process. By centralising the research participant as the narrator of their lived experience, the biography gives research participants the power to decide the stories and narratives to share (c.f., Plesner, 2011). This, in turn, allows them to set the thematic template of the interview and possibly inform analysis at a later stage.

In Mrozowicki's (2011) biographical interview approach, the interview begins with an initial phase of spontaneous narration where the research participant is prompted only once to tell their life history. The interviewer does not probe and does not interrupt in any way. However, they can make affirming

comments to keep the narration going. This is followed by the second phase of the interview where the researcher builds on the narrative from the first phase to seek more information about the thematic focus of the interview, which in our case was labour market experiences. This was followed by the third phase, which provides the researcher the opportunity to ask theoretical questions and fill in missing technical details not mentioned in the preceding phases, such as age, nationality, and more. The average length of the biographical interviews was one hour, and 31 interviews were conducted through this method (3 for article 2, 11 for article 3, and 17 for article 4). All biographical interviews were recorded because of the denseness of life histories and the procedural nature of interviews that made intensive note taking unsuitable. However, I collected brief notes, especially during the spontaneous narration phase, to guide the second and third phases of the interview and to eliminate redundancy.

I used data I collected for my master's degree in the first empirical article. This data was collected via in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews which were aimed at collecting contextually situated narratives of participants' lives beyond the integration period in Finland. I sought information about participants' lives before migration as well as during the migration experience itself. The interview approach was adapted from guidelines in Creswell and Poth (2016) for narrative research, and Corbin and Strauss' (2018) grounded theory techniques for general qualitative research. Twenty interviews were conducted using this method in 2018. I conducted an additional three interviews using biographical methods in 2020 to aid re-analysis for the dissertation article.

The 51 interviews constitute the primary data of the research project. This data was supplemented with insights from my own ethnographic-style observations in the field. As a migrant living in the same migrant communities and engaging the same labour market in Finland as my research participants, I did both participatory and non-participatory observation, though to a limited degree. Throughout my research, I also engaged with my research participants in their natural settings, such as regular meetings of varied migrant networks or migrant association gatherings. Key events were the annual Think Africa week⁴ or Think Africa lounge⁵ discussions. In these settings, I had the opportunity to listen to my colleagues share different perspectives and narratives of their lived experiences in Finland. Sometimes I participated in the conversations by presenting my research questions and arguments, which were debated vibrantly. Migrant integration in general, and labour market integration in particular, were popular topics at these gatherings. Plausible explanations for this are the widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo among migrants, and the weight individuals place on work and as a social status marker, among others.

⁴ Follow link for more on the annual Think Africa week-long event that gathers the African diaspora to discuss a variety of issues including migrant integration: <https://www.thinkafrica.fi/think-africa-week/>

⁵ Follow link for more on the Think Africa Lounge, a bi-weekly gathering of migrants to discuss hot topics shaping the lives of individuals with an African background in Finland, including integration: https://www.thinkafrica.fi/wpos_portfolio/the-think-africa-lounge/

As to be expected, discussions in the migrant group gatherings and the data collection interviews differed in some ways. This was probably a result of the varying levels of (in)formality in the two discussion settings, as well as the fact that one was a collective experience while the other an individual one-on-one experience. In a non-interview and collective discussion format such as the migrant gatherings, individuals shared experiences more freely and even conducted their own analysis of phenomena, sometimes being very critical of themselves, and other times defensive. In the interviews, participants often took a more serious stance which undoubtedly influenced the narratives shared and how they were shared. I was able to use the 'insider' view from these gatherings in the interview process and even in the data analysis process, which I elaborate later in this discussion. For example, the alternative insights and 'informal data' were useful for contextualising the information participants shared in the interviews to improve accuracy of data (see Denzin, 2012, 2015 on data source triangulation; see also Adami & Kiger, 2005). Additionally, I could triangulate especially when interview data was thin, incomplete, or incoherent, for example due to technical reasons such as participants using a colloquial group name or term for a job such as 'disc jockeying' to refer to dishwashing.

I collected data for this research between January 2018 and October 2021. The data collection process for each empirical study differed depending on whether I collected data independently for my doctoral project or collaboratively within a research project. The context of research, independent or project affiliated, has concrete implications for various parts of the data collection process, such as access to research participants, time, and human resource availability. Only the data collected for my master's degree was collected independently, meaning that I was the only human resource and source of financing. I conducted all the interviews, and completed observation work, note taking, and all data processing tasks, which are discussed in greater detail in the next section. However, I worked on the other two empirical studies as part of my work as a research assistant in the Horizon 2020 funded project SIRIUS⁶(Skills and integration of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in EU labour markets - in full. I was part of the Finnish team and worked on the sixth and seventh work packages. These work packages focused on the question of individual barriers and enablers to migrant labour market integration in Finland, and policy analysis and recommendations.

In preparation for fieldwork, I had the privilege of attending a two-day training on biographical narrative interviewing, organised by the project. Training facilitators were senior scholars who had used the biographical approach extensively in their work.

In the framework of the SIRIUS project, the research problem was predetermined, as it had to correspond to the work package description in the funded proposal. However, I had the freedom to design the research questions and interview protocol for the second phase of the biographical interview. These

⁶ Follow this link for more on the SIRIUS project: <https://www.sirius-project.eu/sirius-project>

had to be approved by the head of the Finnish team and work package leaders. Although the research problem aligned with my doctoral project, the target group was wider and included migrants from all continents and regions outside the EU/EEA, as well as refugees and asylum seekers, which led me to revise my doctoral project's research scope. Unfortunately, field work and data collection began in February 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic surged in Finland and across Europe. The pandemic altered the data collection process significantly, as social distancing rules eliminated face to face interactions which are crucial for both recruitment and interviewing. Data collection interviews had to be conducted remotely. Three research assistants helped me in data collection to diversify the language pool and support access to a wider array of participants. This ensured that research participants were interviewed in their preferred language which was often their mother tongue. Languages used in the interviews were English, Russian, Arabic, Somali, and Finnish, and we collected 11 biographies or life histories.

Data collection for the third empirical paper began in September 2020 as the pandemic surged. I used the biographical narrative method and conducted all the interviews in a virtual research field. I focused narrowly on highly educated Black African migrants who were the target group of the first empirical dissertation study. I did this to enable a comparative element in the analysis and to allow me to move the analysis to an abstract, theoretical, and general level. The data pool for the first paper provided a baseline to be tested in the third study. Additionally, it was easier for me to use my contacts to reach black African migrants whom I had engaged with in the past study and with whom I share a number of social networks and platforms in Finland. I conducted 20 interviews in total. My colleagues and I submitted the abstract of the third paper to the annual IMISCOE conference of 2021 where it was accepted in a panel. I presented data and a preliminary analysis at the IMISCOE conference in July 2021. By exposing the data and preliminary analysis to peers and senior researchers, I aimed to test out value addition and appraise accuracy, credibility, and coherence. In the conference I was advised by peers and senior colleagues to remove three participants who did not fit well in the emerging narrative. They were refugees who underwent a significantly different integration process, despite their integration outcomes being similar. In the end I used 17 biographies in the final analysis. My data pool for the dissertation therefore consists of 51 interviews.

Table 1 List of interviews

Dissertation study	Number	Type of interview	Data Collection period
Study II	23	Semi-structured in-depth qualitative	2018-2020
Study III	11	Biographical	2020
Study IV	17	Biographical	2020-2021
Total	51		

3.3.3 Tackling COVID-19 pandemic related challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic and regulations implemented to help manage affected my fieldwork significantly, as most of the fieldwork took place in 2020 and 2021.

The pandemic altered the qualitative research process completely, changing both the field (the space where research takes place) and the tools for data collection. Therefore, the pandemic had significant implications for data analysis. To make matters worse, the beginning of the pandemic and its management procedures such as social distancing coincided with my first ever instance doing biographical interviews, which are heavily socially interactive. There was also no precedence (to my knowledge then) of biographical interviewing through teleconferencing platforms to learn from. The methodological training I attended in January 2020 did not anticipate a global health pandemic. My reflection in this section will be heavily oriented towards addressing these pandemic related issues and the changes I made to the data collection process. I will discuss challenges related to reaching interviewees, some specific challenges with the biographical method in the pandemic context, and a reflection on my positionality interlinked with rapport and trust building in the field.

In March, the Finnish government announced nationwide regulatory measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, two of the measures being closure of public facilities and a social distancing recommendation (see Moisio, 2020). This meant that my research assistants and I could not get into the research field to recruit research participants normally. For instance, there were no migrant gatherings or network and association activities where research participants could be recruited. All recruitment efforts involving associations as gatekeepers happened via emails and proved highly unproductive. The research assistants and I had to rely on our own contacts to find potential research participants and then convince them to take part in an interview via zoom or Microsoft teams. It was especially difficult for individuals to agree to share their personal contacts and agree to a telephone call explaining the research agenda, research method, and how consenting participants could participate in an interview remotely. Absence of a face-to-face contact really undermined relationship formation, as it denied both researchers and prospective participants a human 'face', a critical element in establishing connection, rapport, and trust (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Although I had originally planned to conduct at least 20 interviews, we only managed to successfully recruit and interview 11 participants under the circumstances. We were also not able to reach any asylum applicants, the majority of whom live in reception centres in Finland. Reception centres often house several people and had to implement strict regulation protocols to prevent disease outbreaks. The scope of data was compromised, even though the depth of biographical life histories ensured richness of data that was collected.

The interview as a data collection tool presented some practical and ethical challenges, which risked undermining the quality of the first round of biographical narratives collected in 2020 (see the ethical discussion in 3.2.5). Most participants wanted to do their interviews via phone, sometimes even via

WhatsApp, mainly for the ease of it. Many people contacted had not downloaded or subscribed to Zoom or Microsoft Teams, which were the software the University of Jyväskylä had a privacy agreement with. Technological literacy and comfort also presented issues. Some potential participants were discouraged from participation by real and perceived skill demands of technological software they were unfamiliar with. For some, the technology was an additional burden they were not willing to take on. I opted to commit to methodological rigor rather than sample size. Only participants who were willing to use synchronous video teleconferencing software, or those who could do a face-to-face interview, adhering to the COVID-19 health safety guidelines in place, were interviewed.

In the second round of biographical interviews collected in 2021 for the third empirical study, all interviews were conducted remotely using both Zoom and Microsoft Teams. By 2021, virtual or remote social interactions had become regular and normalized. This made the second round of interviews easier than the first. Participant recruitment was also easier because I had contacts in some social networks of the target group that I had worked with in a prior research project.

On the technique of doing biographical interviews, the first phase (spontaneous narration) can be difficult. A research participant might happen to be a concise speaker or poor narrator who summarises their life history in a few sentences. Participants also engage in sorting, deciding what is worthy and unworthy of sharing, and may therefore leave out components of their story that are useful for contextualising the shared narratives. Sometimes participants may deviate into too many irrelevant details in the spontaneous narration. These challenges were exacerbated by virtually-mediated interviewing. An interviewer should be able to manoeuvre such challenges while retaining the methodological integrity of the approach. With very few guidelines available, management of these issues is typically left to the researcher's discretion.

I developed the interview protocol to accommodate poor outcomes in the spontaneous narration phase. I prepared multiple short open-ended questions to probe key biographical details in lieu of the spontaneous narration phase in addition to the semi-structured questions for phase two. Generally, the spontaneous narration phase was shorter in the initial virtually-mediated interviews conducted between February and May 2020. This improved in later interviews, likely because virtually-mediated communication and virtual communication channels became a staple of formal and informal communication during the pandemic and people became comfortable using them. Additionally, in March of 2021, I attended a biographical research method workshop facilitated by Adam Mrozowicki to update his three-phase biographical interview approach for the pandemic research field (see Mrozowicki, 2011, pp. 265-7). Based on his experiences conducting biographical interviews during the pandemic, Adam shared tactics for improving the spontaneous narration phase and doing virtually-mediated interviews generally.

3.3.4 Ethical aspects

In this section, I discuss how I dealt with the ethical issues of autonomy, respect, doing no harm (or at least doing more good than harm), and positionality in line with the general ethical standards in the social sciences at the university of Jyväskylä and in the EU. Discussion will focus on the process of informed consent, privacy, and impact of the research. I will also comment briefly on ethical issues triggered by pandemic-era changes to the research field (discussed above) and how they were handled.

The two empirical studies that were affiliated with the SIRIUS project received ethical approval from the project's ethics committee. Specifically, the informed consent sheet and research protocols were approved by the committee. Additionally, at the biographical research method workshop, I was trained by a professional expert to handle sensitive matters that may arise in research involving vulnerable individuals such as asylum applicants.

Informed consent was obtained in every interview instance. For every empirical study, I individually or collaboratively wrote an information sheet which introduced the study, its purpose, and objectives. The information sheet also outlined research participant rights, such as the right to withdraw participation at any time and the right to personal privacy, as well as outlining participant responsibilities in the interview. The information sheet also included the researcher's commitment to causing no harm, and informed participants about authorities to contact in case of breach of terms of informed consent. The same information was shared with research participants twice: first during recruitment, and later during the informed consent agreement at the beginning of each interview. When speaking with prospective participants and participants at the beginning of the interview, I used non-technical language and presented the key points orally. The informed consent was signed on paper before the pandemic. During the pandemic the whole informed consent process became virtually mediated. In the cycles of interviews of 2020 and 2021, the informed consent agreement was signed verbally on record at the beginning of every interview. Although some people in the research community had reservations over the verbal consent agreement, I believe it is appropriate as long as the researcher ensured that participants receive all the information needed to make an informed choice on participation.

A second issue concerns research participants' privacy and right to anonymity. Here the objective was to ensure that research participants cannot be identified and affiliated with the research and its findings unless they explicitly ask to be identified. No participant ever requested to be identified in the publications. To ensure privacy of research participants, I removed direct and sometime indirect identifiers from the data during transcription as a de-identification and anonymisation strategy (Angiuli, Blitzstein, & Waldo, 2015; Elliot et al., 2016). I never stored the personal identifiers such as name, social security number and contacts in the same place as interview transcripts. Any stored personal data used, e.g., to contact prospective research participants, were

deleted once data collection was complete. Participants were further anonymised through pseudonyms in published materials.

A privacy concern emerges when interviews are video recorded. During data processing, I only converted and stored audio recordings from Zoom and Microsoft Teams to maximise personal privacy of participants. Moreover, I did not intend to analyse participants' non-verbal behaviour, as this is likely impacted by individuals' predispositions to virtually-mediated social interaction. In the data collection rounds affiliated with the SIRIUS project (2020 and 2021), face to face interviews were strictly recorded using an audio tape recorder. When using Zoom and Microsoft Teams, I used my university account, as the university has data management contracts with the platforms that also adheres to the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). I also used a password protected university computer to store and process data.

The third issue concerns impact of the research which requires that research causes no harm, and in this research specifically, causing good. Ethical social science research must consider how research affects those who participate in it as well the target populations who may be affected by research outputs (see Shamoo & Resnik, 2009). The need to protect research participants and the general target population from harm or any negative backlash due to the study is far greater when participants and the target population represent a vulnerable group or occupy a marginal position in society (c.f., Ellis et al., 2007). Social responsibility as an ethical norm of research requires that research adds value to society, thus going a step further than simply avoiding doing harm (see Resnik 2016).

My research participants are third country national migrants, often non-citizens, and cultural 'others' in Finland who engender varying degrees of intersectional vulnerability depending on their nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, wealth etc. I approach my research as an instance of social justice advocacy with the objective of contributing positive social change to the lives of the most excluded, marginalised, and vulnerable members of the community or society, which includes both my research participants and me. This requires compassion, care, and respect, among other values, in the studies I pursue and the way I conduct my studies.

In this doctoral project, I have used compassionate research methods, which allowed me to implement these values (see my reflection on doing affective research in Ndomo, 2022; see also Ellis, 2016, 2017). For instance, the biographical interview method dispersed power in the interview process by giving research participants room to shape the direction of interviews and thereby set the thematic agenda of the data, analysis, and findings. This in turn reduces the odds of misrepresentation and misinterpretation in research outputs, which when published or adopted into policy might be harmful to participants and the target group (Ellis, 2007). The idea of protecting research participants from harm is central to the empirical discussion of my third dissertation article, where my co-authors and I challenge the dangers of overly simplified interpretation of migrant struggles as signs of strength and stories of success (see Ndomo & Lillie, 2023).

I have also implemented the compassionate research technique of maintaining long term collaboration with participants where possible, as well as making the spaces where participants negotiate their daily lives a space of research (Ellis, 1999, 2016; Ellis & Patti, 2014). One outcome of this approach is improved contextual awareness which supports researchers in making their analysis and policy recommendations more attuned with reality. Additionally, during the dialogue phase of interviews, I often shared insights I was privy to that participants could benefit from but were not familiar with, such as benefits of union membership in Finland.

Illegal and informal activities and practices are typical issues tied to migration. Some migrants live in host countries without legal permits, some are employed in the grey and informal economy, and sometimes, migrants exploit loopholes in societal norms and regulations in unflattering ways. On the receiving end, some migrants experience racism and other kinds of discrimination in their host countries. Some of these sensitive and contentious issues may come up in an interview, and when they do, the researcher must decide how to deal with them.

Indeed, some sensitive issues came up in my studies. Although I had guidelines for handling trauma and discrimination related issues, I did not have a blueprint for dealing with the other potential scenarios. Several participants in the three empirical studies discussed experiences they perceived as discrimination, and sometimes racial discrimination. I listened and if the case did not need further intervention I did not get involved. Where I felt participants could use some help, I shared information about the non-discrimination Ombudsman facility. One participant was working in what seemed to be a grey economy set-up, though I could not be certain. However, it was certain that they were being exploited and they were aware of that. It was also not possible to intervene directly in this case without exposing the participant to potential backlash from employers and perhaps networks that aided them in their job search. However, highlighting these narratives in my research findings could be an indirect intervention if my contribution could impact public discourse or policy in a positive way.

Closely linked to doing no harm is the question of conflict of interest among stakeholders. Migration as an economic and socio-cultural phenomenon has significantly grown in salience in Finland over the past decade. The political class plays a central role in structuring and guiding the discourses on migration as exemplified by the ministry of Interior-led national immigration dialogues of 2022⁷. Migration policies are shaped by public opinion in as far as public opinion informs voter behaviour. My interest is to communicate my findings to migration policy makers, majority of whom are political leaders. However, I also have a responsibility to consider that my research findings can be appropriated to serve political interests that may cause harm to research participants. I have grounded my analysis in theory to create a chain of logic that can make it difficult for

⁷ See more on Finland's national immigration dialogues in 2022 here: <https://inter-min.fi/en/-/immigration-dialogues-invite-people-to-discuss-immigration>

different interest groups to cherry pick portions of my findings to suit their interests, while I maintain a convincing argument (c.f., Denzin et al., 2006). Focusing on structure and systems, as well as illustrating the roles different stakeholders play in the construction of migration 'realities' that shape policy is helpful.

Lastly, a comment on positionality. The stance on subjectivity and objectivity in qualitative research is contested (see discussions in Schneider, 1999; Rennie, 2000; Ratner, 2002). Though qualitative methodology recognises and creates room for researcher subjectivity in the research process, that allowance is regulated in ways that can be contradictory. Ethical research principles require that qualitative researchers include a transparent account of how their subjectivities shape their research through a positionality and reflexivity account (Ratner, 2002; Mruck & Breuer, 2003). This hints to the historical-philosophical assumption that subjectivity negates objectivity, while objectivity largely remains as the anchor to which notions of truth, validity, and integrity are tied (Shapin, 2012). Aiming for integrity and in anticipation of the positionality disclaimer, researchers might opt to go the safe objective route, and minimise their 'footprint' in research. The assumption that researcher subjectivity poses some risks to the research is undoubtedly warranted, but with some caveats. It should not be generalised, as some studies stand to benefit precisely from the biographical capital of researchers (c.f., Peshkin, 1988). I grappled with the subjectivity-objectivity dilemma.

I carried out a study of migrants' position in the Finnish labour market as a migrant who is also an active participant in the Finnish labour market. I would therefore fall in the insider category according to England (1994). In some disciplines, an insider positionality is seen more as a potential risk factor, while in others it is seen as a strength in relation to research credibility (see Drapeau, 2002; Chavez, 2008; Shapin, 2012). Taking on a social justice worldview, I perceive the social and legal positions I share with most of my research participants as a resource, because it establishes a shared identity on which I based research interactions. In most cases this made rapport formation and establishing trust easier. I could understand participants' narratives on, for example, the Finnish residence permit system or Finnish university education, or how a new migrant perceives and experiences the Finnish labour market for the first time, more quickly because I have experiences with the same phenomena. However, this is not to say that my position was always a positive factor. I also had to reflexively deal with the implications of my perceived and real positionality on trust and rapport in the research process in each interview I conducted.

First, not every interviewee perceived a common identity between me and them simply because we were both migrants. In these cases, my positionality did not add any value to the research process, and I depended on my professional skills like any other interviewer would have done. There were a few participants who took issue with my researcher identity and saw our engagement as a potentially exploitative endeavour from which I gain by furthering my academic

standing while they only give but get nothing from it. These discussions typically happened at the informed consent stage. I always explained to participants how I designed the study and the potential small but cumulative benefits they could derive from the study during the interview and in the future, if research findings influence policy. I also explained steps I plan to take to improve the chances that research findings influence policy.

3.3.5 Processing the data: Analysis and trustworthiness

This dissertation is based on three independent but interconnected empirical studies with separate datasets, which were analysed differently according to specific study objectives. Analysis was developed in a sequential manner such that outcomes of initial analysis influenced proceeding analyses. In this summary I draw on theory to synthesise the main findings and abstract the interpretations from those three empirical studies to address the overarching “why” question of my dissertation.

Consistent with my philosophical assumptions, worldview, and qualitative approach to research, I have drawn on the inductive logic in my analysis (Creswell, 2007). As such, I centralise the data and work my way from the specifics in the data to general conclusions that are aimed at analytical generalisation (Yin, 2013). To improve the potential of analytical generalisation, I used a technique of integrating relevant paradigmatic assumptions and theory into the analysis process by for example using theoretical concepts as lenses to be confirmed or disproved by data (see e.g., Creswell & Miller, 2000). In all three studies, data driven thematic analysis techniques were adapted from Denzin’s (1989) and Merrill and West’s (2009) interpretive biographical research approaches, Denzin (1998), Creswell (2007), and Creswell and Poth’s (2016) guidelines to doing narrative research, and Corbin and Strauss’s (2008) grounded theory procedures for general qualitative inquiry.

I will now present my data analysis process through an audit trail type presentation. In addition to illustrating the trustworthiness of this research through an illustrative account of methodological practice as I have done in this section, I will also reflect on the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the account presented in this dissertation. I use these four terms coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) instead of the positivist equivalents such as internal and external validity, generalisability, and objectivity, in keeping with my research philosophy (see also Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.3.5.1 The analysis audit trail

All 51 interviews that were collected for this study were recorded and transcribed, and where necessary translated into anonymised transcriptions which became the analysis material. I used a qualitative data analysis software called QDA Miner Lite in my analysis. I chose QDA Miner Lite because it is free, easy to use, allowed sharing of an active analysis tab with collaborators, and provided the needed analytical functions as shown in the rest of the discussion. I used the

software as the platform or interface for all data analysis activity. Although the documented 'proper' analysis begins after data collection is completed and the entire analysis material is transcribed, in practice, I began engaging my data analytically during interview notetaking and transcription. As I transcribed one interview after another, I took notes of similarities, differences, and any emerging insights. I consulted those notes during the 'proper' analysis. As mentioned above, I adapted my analysis routine and procedure from existing methods. As such, the steps I follow are not an exact replica of the steps outlined in the referenced works (c.f., Denzin, 1989; Creswell, 2007; Merrill & West, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The first step of the analysis phase proper was manually uploading transcripts to the software for organisation. In the software, I organised the transcripts in a sequence but kept them as separate interviews because of the depth of narrative and biographical interviews. The average page number of a single interview transcript was 12 pages. This step was followed by two rounds of thorough reading of all transcribed material. The second step was text coding. I coded transcripts both thematically and by colour, the latter making extraction of excerpts for illustration during article writing easy. During coding, I added reflective and reflexive notes or memos to the coded texts using a function in the software. In coding, I sometimes used the frequency analysis function on the software to compare the experiences of research participants around emerging codes in preparation for code categorisation. After coding the entire transcript, I grouped codes into thematic categories, attempting to use terminology and wording of research participants as much as possible. This is the third step of the analysis. At this point I did a lot of iteration, going back and forth between my codes, research questions and objectives, the theoretical assumptions framing the study, and findings in the literature. This was to allow me to determine the intersection of the empirical and theoretical findings and contribution of the research in focus.

I also evaluated myself in this process to check for and attend to instances of attentional bias and situational influences (see Niemi, 2016), and I shared the developing 'code book' with my supervisors for comments. In the fourth and final step I derived five overarching thematic categories to abstract the analysis. I used those five thematic categories to frame findings in published articles. While writing, some gaps or inconsistencies in the composite analytical narrative would occasionally emerge. In such cases I revisited the relevant analytical trajectories alongside theory to make necessary adjustments.

3.3.5.2 Reflecting on trustworthiness: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability

In the analysis I stayed close to the data to bolster credibility of the final accounts in my outputs (see discussion in Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Sandelowski, 2000). Both the data, being rich biographical accounts and in-depth narratives, and the compassionate research orientation (Ellis, 2016, 2017) aligned well with a data driven analytical approach.

The analysis material in all three studies was rich in detail and highly descriptive; my analytical approach aimed to preserve participants' perspectives and limit representation as much as possible. Sometimes, life histories and narratives were already reflective and analytical as a result of participants arranging their stories and narratives in some formation to facilitate storytelling or narration. In some such instances, reflective and analytical content from participants was not re-analysed. Instead, it was added to the thematic analytical frame as it was presented. An example of this is a variation of the 'boiling toad' story that a research participant shared during an interview, which they used as an analytical frame to appraise their integration. Drawing on Denzin's (1989) proposition to use local theories of interpretation found in data, I opted to foreground the toad story in the analysis of my second empirical study (see Ndomo & Lillie, 2023, p. 177, and Chapter 4 of this summary article).

Qualitative researchers use a variety of techniques to ensure the credibility of the findings and results of their studies (see lists of these in Creswell & Miller, 2000; Shenton, 2004; Amankwaa, 2016). The credibility I seek is with respect to my interpretation of participant narratives and not of "trueness" of their accounts (see Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Here, once again, my techniques reflect my philosophical standpoint in research (see discussion in Creswell & Miller, 2000). I combined data triangulation, prolonged stay in the field, peer feedback, and a variation of member check to ensure credibility of my findings. I augmented my primary data with insights from observation and prolonged stay in the field, which was rather easy to do because I lived in my research field throughout my doctoral project. I was therefore able to collect anecdotal data through observation and interactions with the target group in their daily lives such as at migrant association gatherings and other interaction instances in formal and informal settings. Through these additional glimpses into migrant lives in Finland, I was able to contextualise my interview data better and add layers to interview data. I then crosschecked my data against my interpretation, accounting for closeness and consistency.

I have conducted my doctoral research in a collaborative manner: I have co-written my dissertation articles with colleagues and relied on peers to review my work for methodological rigor. I presented manuscripts of the first and third empirical publications at international scientific conferences where I received feedback on my analytical findings. The third empirical paper went through a further double-blind peer review process before publication. For the analysis of the second paper, which I conducted fully within a collaborative research project, I participated in a joint data analysis workshop with peers conducting similar analysis in seven other country contexts within the EU. In these engagements, I subjected my analysis to standard scientific peer review processes which lend credibility to the final outputs (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking, a process of engaging research participants to check accuracy of a researcher's interpretation and representation of their reality of social phenomena is an outstanding credibility-ensuring technique in qualitative research. I employed a variation of the member check technique in my second study. I presented the

analysis of my second research paper to a group of over 35 migrants at a migrant association gathering for a debate of its appropriateness and accuracy.

In terms of applicability of my research findings, my primary aim was to contribute insights on specific issues pertaining to the structure of the Finnish labour market and integration of highly educated third country national migrants in it. I worked with a narrowly defined participant group consisting of only highly educated African migrants in two studies, and a more diverse participant group consisting of non-EU/EEA citizens from a broader cluster of source countries. This allows me to abstract the overall findings of my research as done in this summary, while also expanding the scope of applicability of findings to other contexts. This is especially important because migrant labour market integration and labour market segmentation are standard socio-economic phenomena in most if not all contemporary economies. Moreover, I use widely known and applied theoretical concepts such as agency, citizenship, and labour market segmentation in my analysis, thus extending applicability or relevance of findings. An elaborative description of my research context and methodology in the individual research papers and in this summary should also make it easy for researchers in other contexts to determine the fit of my research findings to theirs.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) dependability, the equivalent of positivist reliability, requires that a qualitative study be replicable albeit without a demand for identical findings because of the dynamic nature of social phenomena studied through qualitative inquiry and the contextuality of qualitative studies. The use of widely known and used theoretical concepts in this research, as well the thick description of the research context and methodology that I have given, increase its dependability. A good illustration of dependability of my research is my second empirical study, in which the exact research design was simultaneously implemented in seven different country contexts (see Isaakyan et al., 2023). For me, neutrality is a problematic expectation in qualitative research and especially research focused on fundamental social justice questions such as the questions my dissertation addresses. However, in data analysis, my methodological approach and paradigmatic assumptions ensure that participants' perspectives, opinions, and voices remain focal. In addition to this, where possible, I address my positionality in the study. However, because of the limited word allowance in the individual publications I have included a reflection on my positionality in section 3.2.4 above.

3.3.6 Strengths and limitations of my methodology

What I see as a strength of my methodology is the alignment achieved across philosophical assumptions, worldview, and methods. Specifically, the combination and match between my social justice worldview and the compassionate elements of the biographical approach allowed the analysis to implement a social change agenda which would otherwise require a component of action research not possible in this study. The longitudinal-in-nature, rich, descriptive, and reflective life histories and narratives collected via biographical

interviews is another point of strength. Rich life and work histories lent themselves to detailed analysis in the second and third studies.

Finding and being able to use the theoretical lenses of citizenship, disaggregated agency, internal bordering, and labour market segmentation variably in the analyses improves the potential to transfer findings to other settings, as well as to abstract discussion of findings and contributions at a theoretical level. Doing research collaboratively with peers as well as within a large project proved advantageous in many ways, including having access to peers for debriefing and review purposes, co-writing, and greater access to resources such as dedicated methodological training.

My social position as a migrant in Finland was also more of a strength than a weakness, in my opinion. It placed me in the research field throughout my study, allowing me opportunities to engage my research target group and the research problem in multiple contexts and settings outside of the formal research periods. I also had a shared consciousness, to some extent, with my research participants, which was helpful in data collection.

However, there are also weaknesses to my methodology and approach in this study. The first one concerns my paradigmatic and theoretical choices. I drew on watered down or moderate adaptations of the advocacy and participatory (critical) paradigms because of resource limitations, thus potentially undermining the social justice orientation and ends anticipated at the beginning of the study. Similarly, a method such as participatory action research would have not only suited the data collection needs but also ensured that social intervention is achieved during and after research engagement. Additionally, concrete actionable outputs such as policy documents that are typical in action research would serve the action and intervention agenda of the social justice standpoint of the study better. A personal shortcoming that impacted my methodology is language limitation. In Finland, I could only interview individuals who were comfortable using English, which is often not the mother tongue for my target population. This is a hurdle that I occasionally overcame by hiring research assistants, although that was a costly and unsustainable solution for a doctoral researcher. The nationality scope of my research participants is narrow. While this does not have implications on the 'validity' of my research, research covering more migrant nationalities resident in Finland would have additional advantages such as greater transferability, and would better support policy work at the national level.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

I have used a number of theoretical concepts and theories in the individual studies that constitute this dissertation, however three are especially dominant: economic citizenship, labour market segmentation, and disaggregated agency. I will discuss the three theoretical frameworks separately to operationalise them, fleshing out their meanings as applied in my research, including this summary

article. After the separate presentations, I will briefly describe how they intersect, illustrating how their diverse insights can collaboratively be used in a single study of migrant labour market integration in contexts similar to mine.

In the first part I will discuss economic citizenship, which is the main theoretical tool discussed in the first dissertation article. I will present only a brief synopsis of the concept because it is discussed in detail in the first part of Chapter 4 where it frames the discussion of participants' labour market integration experiences. The second part is a discussion of labour market segmentation. A number of labour market segmentation concepts from multiple theories of labour market segmentation are used in the analysis of dissertation articles 3 and 4. However, the concept also appears in articles 1 and 2. In the third part, I will discuss the theoretical concept of disaggregated agency. The concept was used as the analytical framework in article 3, while elements of it are referenced in article 4. Other theoretical concepts such as belonging, inclusion/exclusion, and internal bordering that run through the discussion of migrant integration in the dissertation are not presented separately as they fit well within the three main theoretical concepts discussed below.

3.4.1 Economic citizenship

At a general level, the notion of economic citizenship captures a specific development in citizenship practice, where economic value, independence, and security become the main determinants of membership in a community of value (see discussions in Somers, 2008; Anderson, 2013; Brodtkin, 2014). The conceptualisation of economic citizenship that grounds this dissertation is the one developed in the first dissertation article (Lillie & Ndomo, 2021). I will present it briefly alongside other economic citizenship literature relevant for the discussions this dissertation extends.

I see economic citizenship as a marketized form of national citizenship, which prior to the pervasive spread of market rationality in the context of neo-liberalisation, was one of the main frameworks organising relations between people and the nation state (see e.g., Somers, 2008; Anderson, 2013; Brodtkin, 2014 and also Yuval-Davis, 2007). Citizenship in contemporary capitalist societies is economic, marketized, and commodified. According to Joppke (2021), it is both a neoliberal and a nationalist notion, a privilege and not a right, and therefore has to be earned and can be easily lost. It is made contingent on individual citizens' abilities to earn it, typically by selling their labour and other marketable competences in the labour market, or by purchasing it using wealth (see e.g., Ong, 2006; Brodtkin, 2007; Somers, 2008; Anderson, 2013).

However, economic citizenship is contradictory insofar as it combines an inherently egalitarian ideal of citizenship with an unequal hierarchical market rationality. The result of this is a status that embeds difference and replicates inequality in society – the opposite of what citizenship should accomplish (Polanyi, 1957, 2002; see also Yuval-Davis, 1999; Sharma, 2000; MacLean, 2006; Brodtkin, 2014). While inherently contradictory, it is nonetheless the framework by which relations of inclusion, membership, and belonging in contemporary

communities are managed and negotiated. Economic citizenship is the dominant relational structure, underlying and framing host countries' legal, cultural, and socio-economic relations with non-citizens, including migrants (c.f., Rosaldo, 1997).

In practice, economic citizenship automatically creates market citizens out of people, by reducing all community relations to contractual quid-pro-quo arrangements where citizens earn rights depending on the amount of their effort or investment (Somers, 2008; Fudge, 2012; Anderson, 2013). This creates a division between those who can and do achieve successful economic integration and those who cannot and do not, for reasons such as nature of ascribed and acquired socio-cultural and economic capital. The most unintegrated individuals typically need help from the state to sustain basic welfare, or to attain status parity, and this is where welfare and social citizenship come in (see also Ong, 2006). Herein also lies the idea of integration as a means to relieve excessive commodification, or to compensate for rights and capital deficits that arise from either ascribed or acquired social positions. Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology of welfare states and T.H. Marshall's (1950) conceptualisation of disaggregated and evolutionary citizenship capture how differences may arise in the degree of commodification that citizens and residents bear in different countries (see also Bauder 2008). Esping-Andersen (1990) presents welfare as a de-commodifying resource that offers citizens alternative insurance through social protection mechanisms, which in turn minimise their absolute reliance on their labour for survival.

Marshall (1950) theorised citizenship as an evolving institution, where more rights are extended to greater portions of the population in society through collective and solidarity-based political struggles. Citizenship evolves from its most basic form, civil citizenship, through strategic, organised, and goal oriented political struggles for equality, parity, and social justice to its most evolved form – social citizenship. This development is cemented and sustained by the development of a welfare system, which operates alongside the political governing body, an independent juridical system, and civil society.

On welfare, Esping-Andersen (1990) shows that there is not one standard welfare system, and that the degree of development of the welfare system varies from one nation state to another. In his 3-tier regime classification of welfare states (liberal, conservative, and social democratic), the latter has the most evolved welfare system geared towards universal equality, and therefore has the greatest de-commodification potential. However, being historically situated, and owing to the nuances of nation state sovereignty, access to welfare systems across the globe is typically tied to national citizenship and residence. This means that not all people within a nation state territory can access the de-commodifying benefits of social citizenship.

National citizenship is territorial, reinforced by nation-state's sovereign right to self-determination (see Benhabib, 2005; Bauböck, 2007). This means that globalisation, and the increasing mobility that comes with it, presents a citizenship challenge; migrants bear the brunt of the challenge the moment they

cross national borders into another nation state territory (Rubenstein, 1999; Benhabib, 2002; 2005). Citizenship is not mobile and therefore migration automatically renders migrants 'citizenshipless', at least momentarily, until they can negotiate terms of membership in the host country. That negotiation happens within the framework of economic citizenship (c.f., Anderson, 2013). Migrants agree upon terms of inclusion based on their labour capacity or wealth. As non-citizens, with regard to national citizenship, they are fully commodified as purely market citizens, belonging at first only to the labour market (Piore, 1979; Somers 2008; Anderson, 2013). They do not have a recourse as they don't have access to either social citizenship rights of welfare or solidarity-based protections of industrial citizenship that are based on the common identity of the working class (Brodkin, 2014, p. 117).

This creates a need for integration as a de-commodifying resource (Room, 2000). However, migrants are not a monolith. Though all are commodified and rendered citizen-less by migration, global hierarchies of power and meso- and micro-level hierarchies of ethnicity, race, gender, wealth, educational competences, etc., mean that different groups of migrants come into the migration process with different capital endowments and negotiating leverage (see Mau, 2010; Faist, 2016; see also Sharma, 2000). As a result, migrants will have different integration needs depending on their degree of commodification. While a few wealthy and privileged migrants such as multinational corporation executives may move around the world very easily, backed by the political and socio-economic power of a multinational corporation, and never feeling the pinch of extreme commodification, the majority of migrants today do not fall in this category (ibid, see also Shachar 2006). The former may never want or seek inclusion in the host country which they visit temporarily, while the latter, often in more sedentary occupations or migrating with family, need more inclusion.

Economic integration has levels that migrants work their way through, from bare market citizenship rights to industrial citizenship rights tied to the collective identity of the working class (Brodkin, 2014). Industrial citizenship itself has de-commodifying potential as it can leverage solidaristic power of the working class to challenge extreme market mechanisms that expose workers to socio-economic risks and precariousness (see e.g., Greer, Ciupijus, & Lillie, 2013; Lillie & Wagner, 2017). However, most migrants fall outside of the host country working class in the insider-outsider dichotomy reinforced by employers' use of migrants as cheap labour, strike breakers, etc., to antagonise and weaken working class solidarity. This leaves social integration as the main avenue for alternative inclusion to counter the commodifying market citizenship. Many migrants manage to obtain host country national citizenship through naturalisation (c.f., Ager & Strang, 2008). However, whether this translates into de facto social integration is up for discussion, and the empirical analysis in this dissertation will shed some light into this. Many migrants also fail to gain social inclusion precisely because of the precarious and time and resource demanding nature of their market-based inclusion in the labour market, which is reinforced by practices such as temporary migration regimes.

3.4.2 Labour market segmentation: Key theoretical tenets

At the core of labour market segmentation are inequality and discrimination (Doeringer & Piore 1971; Reich, Gordon, & Edwards 1973; Wilkinson, 1981). A segmented labour market will have multiple wage equilibriums for otherwise equally productive worker groups (Piore, 1979; Ryan 1981; Wilkinson, 1981). In such a market, socio-cultural features such as ethnicity, race, gender and their intersectional combinations, which have no relation to work performance, differentially determine access to good and bad jobs (ibid).

Discriminative labour market norms, practices, and institutions, including internal labour markets, 'balkanisation', and non-competing sectors or groups of workers, are both the cause and result of segmented labour markets (see discussions in Ryan, 1981, Wilkinson, 1981). Labour market segmentation theories foreground the existence of discrimination and imperfect relations in the labour market, which classical economics theories turn a blind eye to (see Piore, 1979; Wilkinson, 1981). While classical economics theories focus squarely on the supply side to explain labour market anomalies, segmentationalists draw attention to the demand side (ibid).

I depart from the understanding that labour market segmentation does not simply concern labour as a discrete category nor labour's mechanical distribution into occupations and roles in the labour market. Inherent in labour is a complex intersection of socio-cultural artifacts that human beings, the containers of labour embody and embed into the labour (see discussions in Hori, 2009; Alberti, Holgate, & Tapia, 2013; Nare, 2013; Grimshaw et al., 2017). As such, within the socio-cultural category of labour are several ascribed social positions such as gender, qualification, skill, ethnicity, nationality, race, competence, legal status, etc. These embedded features intersect uniquely at different points across time and place to produce an 'identity' for labour, which in turn shapes the way labour is perceived, valued, and treated.

An intersectional lens draws attention to the social construction process behind the making of labour as a social category, which begins with labour valuation. In other words, labour is not an external or essential truth or reality (see discussions of the labour process in Burawoy, 1976; and empirical illustrations in Rodriguez, 2004; May et al., 2007; MacKenzie & Forde, 2009; Nare, 2013; Martin & Prokkola, 2017). The person bearing labour power influences the value bestowed on that labour, the same way the person that does the valuation matters too. As a result, differences sometimes emerge between people who are otherwise comparable in terms of pure labour competence in the valuation process (ibid).

On some occasions, therefore, an African migrant's master's degree in information systems from university A in Finland will be valued differently than the same degree when held by an Indian (all other variables held constant) (see discussion in Ndomo & Lillie, 2023). Similarly, the 'caring' ability of an Asian nurse or care giver compares differently in value to a Finnish nurse's ability (see Nare, 2013). Employers, for example, constantly construct imaginaries of migrant workers' abilities, informed by stereotypes, past experiences, cultural

understanding, etc., and use those imaginaries as lenses when hiring and placing migrants at work (see Ford & MacKenzie, 2009; Nare, 2013).

The valuation of labour also encompasses the question of the position workers occupy in society and how that position affects occupational distribution: that is who gets to do what and be whom in a given society (see Brodtkin, 2014, p. 117). It is a question of citizenship and membership in what Bridget Anderson terms the community of value (Anderson, 2013). The argument here is that holding a job also means holding a socio-cultural position in society that has implications for the community, and goes beyond individual socio-economic benefits and interests (Brodtkin, 2014).

Through the job, one attains some level of community membership, or citizenship, as well as citizenship responsibilities that spill over the actual tasks of the job (see also Anderson, 2013). An example of such responsibilities is maintaining the collective identity of the community such as Nokia employees used to do in the Finnish context. A shared collective consciousness that is the backbone of industrial citizenship is also a responsibility of the working class (Pizzorno, 1978; MacKenzie et al., 2006). As a social category, the working class is accessible through collective and solidarity-based participation such as trade union membership and participation in union organised walkouts and picketing, among other solidarity activities.

Therefore, to reproduce itself, society or the community of value is likely to regulate the distribution of jobs to indirectly manage its collective identity and citizenship privileges. Indeed, in modern society, high rank jobs such as head of state and military are heavily restricted, while positions at the bottom tier of the labour market are left open. Labour market segmentation, therefore, reflects the citizenship and nationalism agenda of a country (Joppke, 2021).

3.4.2.1 Labour market segmentation: International outlook

A labour market, whether global, regional (e.g., the EU), national, or local is never simply a unified egalitarian unit. Instead, any single labour market in the contemporary capitalist economy is segmented, and thus consists of sectorised or clustered occupations with clear boundaries that differentiate one sector from the other, with different regulatory frameworks for their management. Labour market segmentation theories such as Piore's (1979) seminal work scrutinize and theorise the history, nature, and process of labour market division with a focus on the demand side. Piore (1979) posits that labour markets dualise into a primary (lower and upper tier) and secondary sector on a continuum of stability. Stability is strongest on the primary end and weakest on the secondary end.

Refinements of dual segmentation theories argue that the labour market does not merely dualise, but rather segments vertically into primary and secondary sectors, as well as horizontally within sectors, so that a market can consist of multiple segments (see a review in Kreckel 1980; see also Wilkinson, 1981; Ryan, 1981; Leontaridi, 1998). Primary-secondary sector divisions are also argued to reflect class division in society, with the secondary sector corresponding to the working class, the low tier primary sector corresponding to

the middle class, and the upper tier primary sector corresponding to the elite middle class (Reich et al., 1973). In this summary article and throughout my PhD research, I draw upon this expanded definition of labour market segmentation.

Within this expanded school of thought, labour market segmentation portrays a process by which labour markets divide or stratify into multiple sectors or occupational clusters. These sectors, and the processes that produce them appear banal and normative by classical economics' accounts. However, labour market segmentation is really about the distribution of workers into occupations or sectors on the basis of their ascribed characteristics, rather than on the basis of achieved characteristics such as labour market competences (Ryan, 1981; Offe & Hinrichs, 1985 as referenced in Peck, 2003). While division of labour is normative, especially in a post Fordist economy where production is characterised by a level of specialisation, labour market segmentation is not.

Classical economists tended to portray the labour market as a true market, where market cycles and labour demand and supply dynamics play out, with an equilibrium determining wages, worker absorption or redundancy (see discussion in Piore, 1979; Wilkinson 1981; Leontaridi, 1998). But this perspective also focused heavily on the supply side of labour (especially because of migrant labour) to explain emerging segmentation patterns (ibid). However, a group of researchers who turned this argument on its head, focusing on the demand side of the equation, gave rise to the labour market segmentation school of thought as we know it today (see e.g., Doringer & Piore, 1971; Reich et al., 1973; Piore, 1979). Their theorisation gives primacy to employer demand behaviour and interest. In my research, the interests of the host country government, and other parties allied to the employers such as national migration management bodies and labour unions, are added to the demand side perspective explored.

In segmented labour markets, the decision of who gets to do which job is based not on pure market mechanisms of supply and demand, nor on merit in terms of productive capacity (Reich et al., 1973; Leontaridi, 1998). Instead, a nuanced interaction between supply, demand, and additional context specific factors such as regulations and institutional power dynamics develop into unique criteria for the division of labour. Resulting divisions will tend to be inherently biased, unjust, and unequal (see empirical illustrations in Anderson, 2000; Ford & MacKenzie, 2009; Wills et al., 2009; Nare, 2013; Martin & Prokkola, 2017).

Moreover, (political) power as leverage influences this process greatly, and relatively few voices end up determining the elements of the criteria guiding division of labour (Leontaridi, 1998). Power imbalances mean that structure (labour market organisations and institutions, state apparatus, political bodies, and capital owners) is favoured over labour in this process. In the EU, worker posting, a controversial labour mobility regime by several socio-economic standards, is upheld by EU directives and case laws that de facto prioritise the rights of establishments over individual workers (see Cremers, 2010, 2011; also Lillie, 2016). In all the guest worker schemes of Europe, the United States, and

South Africa, it was employers, labour organisations, and political parties that lobbied for temporary foreign labour (Hahamovitch, 2003).

Owing to the predominance of capital's interest in the structuring of the labour market and division of labour therein, most labour market segmentation is oriented towards keeping labour cheap, flexible, and precarious (Cremers, 2011; McCollum & Findlay, 2015). And although labour sorting and division differ contextually, segmented labour markets tend to yield largely similar results: unequal and unfair division of labour, social status, and social security among otherwise comparable subgroups in the workforce.

A key argument in Piore (1979) is that labour market dualisation is only possible because of migrant workers, who are imported specifically to fill up positions that the native population avoids. Piore argues that migrants take up these jobs because of a dual frame of reference, a temporary outlook on life, and a homo-economicus rationality (Piore, 1979; Anderson, 2000; c.f., De Haas, 2008). Further, once migrants begin doing such jobs, the jobs become identified as migrant jobs, introducing the practice of occupational clustering and immobility between job clusters or sectors. However, the migrant job and native job division is never perfect, and migrant jobs are rarely occupied exclusively by migrants. Usually, some ethnic nationals that are socio-culturally subordinated to the margins of society for varied reasons, including, for example, Bridget Anderson's vagrant and benefit scroungers, youth and women (2013).

Once established and widely spread, labour market segmentation might partly explain why labour migration constitutes a significant 70% of the international migrant stock today. An inference from this is that labour market segmentation can be a driver of migration. Whichever the case, both labour migration and labour market segmentation are present in contemporary labour markets and deserve to be critically engaged.

A final noteworthy feature of segmented labour markets is the disconnect between sectors, especially the vertically divided primary and secondary sectors which ensure that mobility between the sectors is virtually impossible (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Kerr, 1954). The implications of this disconnect is magnified for migrants. This is because migrants, owing to human and social capital deficiencies in the host society, typically enter the labour market through low skill, low capital secondary sector jobs with the hope of transitioning into more fitting jobs later in their integration journey (see also Offe & Hinrichs 1985 as referenced in Peck 2003). According to Kerr (1954) and Atkinson (1984), the primary sector has internal market rules whose main purpose is to protect the primary sector from external forces such as market dynamics of labour demand and supply. These rules keep the primary sector immune from the activities of the secondary sector, and serve as a barrier to secondary sector workers seeking admission into it (ibid).

3.4.2.2 Labour market segmentation: The Finnish context

Owing to the Nordic welfare system, Finnish labour markets should ideally not segment in the same way that Anglo-American and liberal welfare state labour

markets do. Forsander (2003) argues that the Finnish labour market would not segment by sector and working conditions because of the highly regulated nature of the Finnish labour market, and the universal social security provisions of the welfare state.

Valtonen (2001) highlighted the first instances of labour market segmentation and occupational concentration in the labour market integration realities of the initial (non Ingrian Finn) migrant groups that arrived in Finland in the 1990s. Following Valtonen (2001), more empirical studies have documented discrete features and elements of labour market segmentation in varied sectors and industries in Finland. Näre (2013) and Vartiainen et al. (2016) focused on the healthcare industry; Lillie, (2012) focused on construction and the metal industry; Martin and Prokkola (2017) on higher education, aviation, and agriculture; Ndomo, Bontenbal & Lillie (2023) on drivers of segmentation across multiple occupations in Finland, and Mustosmäki (2017) on the differential implications of segmentation between migrant and non-migrant Finnish groups. Though present, it is important to emphasise that segmentation in the Finnish labour market runs counter to strong egalitarian norms and institutional structures that are likely to tame down its severity, or the severity of its implications for workers.

The Nordic welfare state and the strong in-group loyalty it embeds enforces a strong and even permanent differentiation between a Finnish 'us' group and the 'other' group that consists largely (but not exclusively) of migrants (Forsander, 2003). The insider group enjoys greater economic rights and employment related socio-economic stability while the 'others' contend with limited economic rights and greater instability and precariousness in the labour market. Forsander (2003) asserts that nationality and ethnicity are the most impactful lines of segmentation in the Finnish labour market, consistent with the ethnic hierarchy of migrants (see also Jaakkola, 2000; Koskela, 2014). As employers turn to the ethnic hierarchy of migrants during recruitment, an ethnicity or nationality driven division of labour emerges (see Valtonen, 2001; Ahmad, 2015). Migrants become concentrated in specific jobs and occupations which become 'immigrant jobs' (see Ahmad, 2005, 2015; Wahlbeck, 2007; Ollus 2016a; Larja & Peltonen, 2023), by default designating all other jobs outside of the 'migrant job' category as native Finnish jobs.

Migrants do not have access to occupational ladders even in their typical low to medium skill jobs in cleaning and care, as Näre (2013) illustrates by the demonstrated absence of migrant care workers in top-tier roles such as head nurse. As migrants are typically underemployed, their movement upwards the mobility ladder is delayed, if it happens at all. An implication of underemployment is that workers are employed in roles or occupations other than the ones they are trained in. In such cases, internal market rules will be the hinderance to migrants' career mobility possibilities (Valtonen, 2001; Heikkilä, 2005; see illustration of this in the care industry also in Laurén & Wrede, 2008).

The labour market integration of 'culturally distant' migrants in Finland has historically been difficult, and segregation has perhaps been a key approach in

how the Finnish labour market deals with 'culturally distant' migrant workers. The first notable numbers of non-Ingrian Finn migrants arrived in Finland in the 1990s, mostly as humanitarian migrants from Somalia, Kosovo, and Vietnam (Forsander, 2002; Koikkalainen, 2021). Valtonen (2001) outlines the group's difficult labour market entry as the foundation for future segmentation by legal status lines. At first, these migrants could not get employment in Finland, yielding unemployment rates above 70% which were compounded by the early 1990s economic depression in Finland. However, as the economy bounced back and migrants completed integration training in the Finnish language and varied labour market skills, their labour market integration remained poor, with unemployment at three times the national percentage (Valtonen, 2001; Forsander, 2002). Further, Valtonen identifies that migrants in the labour market were concentrated in low skill and low status jobs that did not correspond to their labour market competence (2001). Even the skills and competences obtained through Finnish state designed integration training were overlooked (*ibid*).

Ideally, the existence of labour market segmentation at all in the Finnish context is anomalous because of the protective capacity of universalist welfarism, and the strong regulations that characterize the Nordic labour market model. It is therefore important to characterise the impact of segmentation on workers on the fringes of the Finnish labour market, that fall out of socially protected zones. According to Piore (1979), low wages (and therefore wage exploitation), or low returns on productivity were driving forces behind labour market segmentation in the United States. It was employers with a cheap labour business model for maximum competitive advantage that created a demand for migrant workers. Those employers devised mechanisms to keep labour cheap for example through temporary contracts and a contingent legal status (Piore, 1979; Ryan, 1981; see also Rodriguez, 2004). The low wages, in turn, drove ethnic citizens out of these jobs; as more and more migrants took them up, they became migrant jobs, and as more jobs became migrants' jobs, clusters of occupations characterised by low wages initiated and sustained divisions in the labour market along worker nationality and ethnicity, but also along legal status lines (*ibid*).

In Finland, the few available low skill jobs typical of the secondary sector of the labour market such as cleaning have lower wages compared to the high skill jobs in the primary sector (Ho & Shirono, 2015). However, even the 'low' wages in Finland are relatively high by international standards, owing to industrial level collective wage bargaining and the extended coverage of centralised collective agreements (Böckerman & Uusitalo, 2006). The latter ensures that even migrants who may not be individually represented by unions benefit from the protective collective work of unions on labour rights and working conditions. This is a key factor in keeping Finnish wages high even in secondary sector occupations, because unions ensure that pay corresponds to productivity. The apparent tight regulations reign in employers' cost cutting strategies but do not eliminate wage exploitation completely, especially in sectors dominated by migrant workers (see Berntsen & Lillie, 2015; Danaj & Sippola, 2015).

Employers turn to other cost cutting strategies, such as minimum compliance with regulations, or regulatory arbitrage to keep production costs low even without explicitly depressing wages (see discussion in Martin & Prokkola, 2017; see also Forde & MacKenzie, 2009; Berntsen & Lillie, 2015). For instance, an employer might exploit a migrant worker's poor understanding of the local labour market and worker rights to make workers do a greater workload within a shorter time period than native Finnish workers would accept (see Ndomo & Lillie, 2023). Past empirical studies, and this doctoral research project demonstrate occurrence of this in cleaning, care work, the restaurant sector, and postal delivery (see e.g., Ollus, 2016a; Maury 2017, 2020). Disregarding migrant workers' qualifications and misplacing them in the occupational hierarchy is another way employers keep migrant workers' wages low. For instance, a common practice in the care industry is hiring a qualified registered nurse for a lower tier rank as practical nurse or nurse assistant, roles which are remunerated at a lower rate (Sirpa & Wrede, 2008; Vartiainen et al., 2016).

Other times, even when migrants are underemployed or hired in ranks beneath their training and qualification levels, they end up working according to their qualifications for lower wages (see discussion on regulatory arbitrage in Berntsen & Lillie, 2015). Employing students, for example, allows employers to pay workers less, as legislation allows lower pay in the absence of proof of qualification. In the university, for example, this would mean hiring a graduate student at an undergraduate wage level until graduation, at which point their temporary employment might be discontinued and other graduate students can replace them. This strategy is employed widely in the care and restaurant industries (See Könönen, 2019; Maury, 2020).

Poor working conditions for a subset of the workforce, typically those in the secondary sector, exist (albeit subtle and hidden in legislative loopholes). Contracts are a key segmentation tool in the Finnish labour market in this regard, and are the driving force behind intra-industry, and intra-firm segmentation in both the primary and secondary sectors (Forsander, 2003; Sippola & Kall, 2016). Contracts are used to differentiate between otherwise similar and comparable workers within the same sector, occupation, and even role. According to a member survey of the Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT), over 60% of university staff worked under temporary fixed term employment contracts in 2019 (Tietenkijät, 2023; see also Jousilahti et al., 2022).

Multiple studies also show that the Finnish labour market continues to segment, as various sectors, industries, and occupations respond to varied relevant developments. Key developments include European Union enlargement and accompanying migration flows, demographic changes, economic cycles, and global socio-economic megatrends (c.f., Wills et al., 2009; Friberg & Midtboen, 2018; see also Kuosmanen & Meriläinen, 2022). The Eastern Europe enlargement of the European Union and the ascension of eight new and less wealthy member states to the bloc instantly created a conducive environment for largely unidirectional labour migration from new to old member states (ibid). The obvious difference in wages between member states, for example, creates a dual

frame of reference with a potential to sustain labour migration even under poor remuneration and social security conditions.

This scenario was further complicated by transition rules imposed by most of the initial 15 member states, and the consequential growth of worker posting – a labour mobility regime that operates within the free movement of services and establishments principle. Empirical studies have demonstrated loopholes in the worker posting regulation that (unfavourably) segregates posted workers from nationals in the same work sites through different employment terms, including wages, contracts, working conditions, and social security (see e.g., discussion in Danaj, Hollan, & Scoppetta, 2020). Posted workers are also differentiated from freely mobile migrant workers, thereby placing them at the bottom of the labour hierarchy wherever they are involved (Lillie, Wagner, & Berntsen, 2014; Berntsen & Lillie, 2015; Danaj & Sippola, 2015). However, since Eastern Europeans are culturally closer to the native populations of the initial 15 EU member states, their labour market integration differs from that of non-EU and non-European third country nationals. This adds new segmentation lines to the picture. Wills et al. (2009) provide a glimpse into this with their illustration of recruiters' re-evaluation of the migrant division of labour in London upon the arrival of the A8 workers.

To comprehensively understand labour market segmentation, it is also important to understand the actors and stakeholders driving it in a specific context. In guest worker programmes and many temporary labour migration schemes today, employers are the predominant actors behind segmentation. However, they are fundamentally aided by the state, labour organisations, political parties, and the native population through laws, regulations, and socio-cultural ideals (see e.g., Piore, 1979; Forde & MacKenzie, 2009; Hahamovitch, 2013; Rodriguez, 2014). A good illustration of this is the coming together of forces that shaped guest worker programmes throughout history (see Hahamovitch, 2003; Surak 2013). In the Finnish labour market, migrants no doubt drive labour market segmentation with integration of more migrant groups, inspiring new segmentation lines in the labour market. The way migrants integrate, or rather, are integrated in Finnish society determines, in large part, the resulting labour market segmentation patterns.

Considering all of the above, I argue that, like the post-World War II guest worker programmes, the interests and the activities of a host of actors and institutions shape segmentation of the Finnish labour market. Employers, migration services (*Migri*), higher education institutions, government bodies, and the competition state agenda all play a role in the way workers are differentiated, valued, and distributed in the Finnish labour market.

3.4.3 Disaggregated (human) agency

Agency is a robust theoretical concept that has been applied in several ways to draw attention to positions of power or control that individual human beings occupy in any context of action (Sewell, 1992; Barnes, 2000; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). It is a highly nuanced and complex concept. In this research, I demarcate

tight limits around what I consider to be human agency. I use it to refer to the variety of social acts that migrants undertake as a result of pressures emanating from the structural framework or contexts that mediate their daily lives in Finland, especially in the labour market.

Existing research on human agency in migration and migrant integration can be classified into four categories, each category consisting of several stances. In the first category, classical migration theories claim that the decision to migrate is a rational choice, thus an exercise of agency (Massey, 1999). Neoclassical labour migration theories expand the classical agentic parameters by highlighting the collective role of the family in the decision-making process (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Abrego, 2014). Critical migration theories refer to the exercise of constrained agency mediated by social networks and structure (Hellman, 2008). The second category, in which agency is defined as resilience, represents a burgeoning body of research on the exercise of individual agency in protesting unequal, oppressive, and contingent labour market relations. These studies focus on migrants' coping strategies and survival tactics, understood as acts of 'resistance' (See Andreotti, 2006; Datta et al., 2007; Rydzik & Anitha, 2020). In the third category, the industrial relations approach studies collective practices of agency through unions as well as alternative collective and individual practices of resistance. The focus of such studies is migrant workers' structural positions in the labour market, migrant worker organising, participation in oppositional collective resistance, and alternative migrant worker organising through worker centres and similar initiatives (Berntsen, 2016; Paret & Gleeson, 2016). The fourth category offers a growing body of research focusing on migrants exercising agency on behalf of other migrants on social causes such as immigration and educational reforms for the wider migrant community (Voss & Bloemraad, 2011).

Nonetheless, agency as conceptualised in this body of migration literature is fuzzy and ambiguous. Multiple concepts are conflated into a category called agency, while others are used interchangeably even when they hold obviously divergent meanings. An example is the usage of resilience and resistance in place of agency to refer to the same thing. Therefore, I sought a single theory of agency that captures its nuance by breaking down its components. I found the solution in Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) concept of disaggregated agency, as developed in Katz (2004).

Following Emirbayer and Mische (1998), I consider agency as a process of social engagement that is embedded in the flow of time, thus informed by the past and oriented toward the present and future. Such a conceptualisation highlights the temporally embedded nature, as well as the multiple dimensions of agency. In reality, agency manifests as the capability to exert some degree of control over the conditions and circumstances of one's life, exploit available opportunities, and open new possibilities (Barnes, 2000; Sewell, 1992). This view is grounded in a heterogeneous reading of agency that differentiates its analytical dimensions. Cindi Katz advances an elaborate framework of differentiated agency termed 'disaggregated agency'. It is based on a three-step typology of material practices of social response to perceived oppressive and unequal power

relations (Katz, 2004). In Katz (2004), the three broad social action groups (resilience, reworking, and resistance) are treated as different manifestations of human agency. Katz's theory of disaggregated agency links concrete social practices to varying degrees of consciousness or awareness of prevailing life conditions. Thus, every agentic response derives from the actor's level of awareness of their life conditions and the power relations that shape their life. The range of awareness consists of limited consciousness for resilience on one end and oppositional counterhegemonic consciousness for resistance on the other end, while reworking falls in the middle (Katz, 2004, p. 250).

This framework underscores the possibility for divergent responses by individuals exposed to similar structural contexts of hegemonic power relations, e.g., migrants in a host country labour market. Katz's theory also spotlights the diverse outcomes of agentic social action, which include survival (resilience), reconfiguration (reworking), and subversion (resistance) (Katz, 2004, p. 242). Katz defines resilience as a determination to survive within oppressive conditions, enforced through a myriad of tactics on a daily basis. Datta et al. (2007) identify resilience tactics such as working two jobs among migrants in low wage occupations in the UK. Reworking practices are strategies for reconfiguring the self and rerouting resources to favour one's position and to make living conditions more liveable, albeit within the confines of oppressive power relations (Katz, 2004; see also Berntsen, 2016). Lastly, resistance describes strongly oppositional practices whose goal is to re-imagine and reconstruct unequal and oppressive power relations (Katz, 2004).

In this research, I use Katz's three disaggregated components of agency: resilience, reworking, and resistance to make sense of migrants' varied integration decisions and actions. Since Katz's categories infer both the purpose or objective of social action, as well as the basis of such action (e.g., past experiences that shape a specific consciousness and understanding), they provide a useful analytical tool for interpreting migrants' integration experiences from a theoretical point of view.

3.4.4 Summary of theoretical framework

Here, I extract a theoretical summary from the theoretical discussions above which I will use to frame the analysis that follows in Chapter 4 below.

It can be safely generalised that economic citizenship, influenced by market mechanisms, is a well proliferated reality in contemporary societies where market neoliberalism prevails. Owing to the pervasive spread of neoliberalism as a socio-economic and perhaps even a cultural order in modern capitalism, we can expect economic citizenship to be the norm. Its implications, such as commodification, are likely variable from one context to another, such that economic citizenship's manifestation in Finland will be unique.

Economic citizenship's contingent nature exacerbates difference, inequalities, and hierarchies between people, communities, and societies. This creates a conducive environment where inherently discriminative and divisive practices such as labour market segmentation can thrive. Labour market

segmentation tends to appear normal, perhaps even banal unless problematised. It is normal that there are high tier jobs on one hand that most people orient their careers toward, and low tier jobs on the other that most people, if able, avoid.

The problem with segmentation is not the division of the labour market into tiers or segments, but rather how and why that division is done in the manner that it is done, and who it affects. This dissertation focuses on these two questions. Although labour market segmentation literature sometimes addresses the factors that cause segmentation, those factors are not problematised or critically engaged. Instead, reasons such as migrant workers' low skill levels, migrant's dual frame of reference, target earning mentality, and more are treated with a level of essentialism.

I attempt to theoretically unpack the social and structural productive processes that enforce segmentation using the case of third country national migrant workers' integration experiences in the Finnish labour market. Ultimately, my analysis indicates that migrants are social actors with some degree of power and level of control over the circumstances of their lives such as their integration in a host country labour market. Migrants put their agentic capacities to use in different ways to support their integration efforts. How this holds or performs within and against labour market structures, especially in a segmented labour market, is one of the issues discussed in the analysis that follows.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Explaining the differential inclusion of third country national migrants in the Finnish labour market

In this chapter, I present and discuss the main findings of the four independent studies that, alongside this summary article, constitute this dissertation. Discrete findings from the studies (see Table 2 below) are synthesised and abstracted through theoretical analysis into a single coherent narrative that answers the three overarching research questions of the dissertation:

1. **What is the position that highly educated third country national migrants occupy in the Finnish labour market?**
2. **What are the structural/institutional and personal factors shaping that position?**
3. **Why are they in that position?**

The discussion proceeds in three parts, each part engaging one of the three research questions at a theoretical level, and linking each question to relevant academic debates. Drawing on the second, third and fourth articles, the first part of the discussion characterises research participants' labour market positions in terms of jobs occupied and the socio-economic status ascribed to the migrant workers. The second part draws on the theoretical framework outlined in the first article to unpack the constructive or productive function of the legal status regime and labour market segmentation in shaping participants' labour market position at the level of structure, as well as migrant agency at the personal level. The third part draws on the fourth article to extend a plausible analytical explanation for research participants' apparent labour market position and integration outcomes as evidenced by the three empirical studies of the dissertation. This final part of the discussion adds an additional analytical insight not previously discussed in any of the four dissertation articles. Before delving into the discussion of findings, I present a summarised list of the main findings from each of the four dissertation articles in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of findings from dissertation articles

Study/ Dissertation publication	Main findings	Section in dissertation summary
1	1. Economic citizenship plays a significant structural role in shaping contemporary individual-community relations including migrant integration and therefore provides a useful theoretical and methodological heuristic for investigating migrant integration processes.	4.2
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student legal status is a pervasive structural bordering tool through which student migrants' everyday experiences in varied domains of Finnish society is differentially controlled results in differential inclusion and exclusion. 2. Failure to recognise migrants' labour market competences acquired locally and abroad undermines migrants' labour market integration by confining them to low-status secondary sector occupations in the Finnish labour market. 3. Highly educated African migrants occupy a subordinate position in the Finnish labour market that appears to be ascribed rather than acquired, meaning that it is attributed based on the attributer's perceptions and interpretation of varied individual characteristics of the migrant and not the standard labour market competences. 	4.1, 4.3
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Migrant agency (especially as resilience and reworking) can play a counterintuitive role in reinforcing problematic labour market practices and integration norms, and therefore should not be uncritically reified as a personal-level integration resource or tool. 2. Individual human agency-based bottom-up integration interventions such as resilience, reworking, and resistance are inadequate and ineffective in challenging and transforming structural integration barriers. 3. Third country national migrants tend to concentrate in a particular profile of low-status secondary sector occupations in the Finnish labour market despite high educational attainment and labour market competences. 	4.1, 4.2, 4.3
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highly educated African migrants occupy a subordinate position in the Finnish labour market and tend to occupy low-status jobs that are concentrated in the secondary sector of the labour market. 2. The legal and socio-economic conditions of the student legal status shape student migrants' labour market integration opportunities and outcomes by either initiating or reinforcing occupational segmentation. 	4.1, 4.2, 4.3

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The integration of highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market is characterised by occupational segmentation based on migrancy and legal status among other differentiation markers. 4. The legal and socio-economic conditions of the student legal status play a productive role in the subordination of student migrants in the Finnish labour market. 5. Response to COVID-19 pandemic induced labour demands in the care sector underscore the rigidity and resilience of the structural segmentation of the Finnish labour market. 	
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4.1.1 Subordinate: Migrants' positions in the Finnish labour market

In this first part of the discussion, I focus on a single key finding that cuts across all three empirical studies of the dissertation and concerns the position research participants occupy in the Finnish labour market. It addresses the first research question of the dissertation.

The notion of labour market position as used in this discussion refers to the broad issue of inclusion as a marker of labour market integration. The position a migrant occupies in the labour market would therefore signify the degree or extent of their integration. For the purposes of this research, I define labour market position as a holistic status category influenced by multiple factors, but mainly the job profile participants could or tended to gain admission into, the relative position of those jobs in terms of status verses other job groups in the labour market, and the perceived "migrantisation" or "Finnishness" of the jobs.

The profile of jobs research participants concentrated in, and the scope of their labour market opportunities as illustrated in studies 2, 3, and 4, demonstrate that research participants occupy a subordinate position in the Finnish labour market, and are themselves valued as a subordinate workforce. The first dimension of their subordinate labour market position has to do with the profile of jobs that they tended to occupy. Research participants' jobs were subordinate to other jobs in the same sector and outside of the sector in terms of social status. The second dimension has to do with the participants themselves being subordinated through a valuation process in which their professional and labour market competences are misrecognised and undervalued. As a result, they are wrongfully placed in subordinate and inferior jobs and professional roles. The second dimension of subordination targeted at the worker creates distinctions that allow a division of the working class, with the subordinate group falling in a position I refer to as a working underclass.

A common finding across all the three empirical studies of the dissertation was that research participants concentrated in a few service sector jobs and occupations that tended to be low-status, low or medium-skill, and menial – dubbed "the bad first job". "The bad first job" included jobs such as cleaning,

newspaper delivery, housekeeping, restaurant assistant, and assistant and practical nurse. Relative to other jobs within the service sector, these jobs and occupations occupy a subordinate position in terms of status. This position is reflected in lower wages, less employment security, and, to some degree, poorer working condition norms. Overrepresented in “the bad first job”, research participants inherit the subordinate position inherent in it.

However, analyses in articles 3 and 4 imply that research participants themselves are subordinated through a differential valuation system that casts them as a working underclass in the Finnish labour market (compare to discussion in Bauder 2006). Employers in the Finnish labour market consistently undervalue, misrecognise, or fail to recognise research participants as professionals or competent labour market actors fit to participate on par with other workers in the labour market across professions and occupations. As article 3 illustrates, being highly educated, skilled, and trained in Finnish higher education institutions, did little to improve research participants’ labour market opportunities and professional standing, even in in-demand professions in IT and nursing where Finland currently faces shortage of skills and labour.

The problem here, I argue, is one of recognition, or to be precise, misrecognition (Fraser, 1998, 2007). Misrecognition in this context refers to employers’ refusal to see and accept research participants as professionals and experts fit for certain roles, occupations, and professions in the Finnish labour market. Such misrecognition results in subordination, a demotion to an inferior status or professional position. An excellent example of this is the blatant misrecognition and disregard of the professional capabilities of migrant registered nurses, who despite being trained and licensed in Finland, are treated as inferior and subordinate professionals in the Finnish care industry.

Migrant registered nurses trained and licensed in Finland are typically differentially absorbed into the Finnish care industry through the professionally subordinate roles of assistant and practical nurse, as established in past research and illustrated in the fourth article of this dissertation (see also Näre, 2013; Vartiainen et al., 2016; Heponiemi et al., 2018). Nearly all research participants in the nursing profession reskilled into it for two reasons. First, the labour shortage in the sector was seen as a guarantee for better employment opportunities. Second, the profession enjoys a better social standing relative to “the bad first job”. However, these benefits did not materialise as expected. Instead, research participants’ integration into the nursing profession was differentiated such that they occupied a subordinate position within the nursing profession itself. A distinct stratum where migrants are concentrated is separate from mainstream nursing, where the national level norms of the profession are upheld.

In the migrant nursing sector, subordinate terms of employment such as precarious 0-hour and shift-based nominally independent employer-employee relation contracts, and lower wages, among others, ensure that migrant nurses yield subordinate socio-economic outcomes from their labour market participation. The distinct nursing profession that research participants manage to be a part of can be bundled into “the bad first job” category because of the

nature of the terms and conditions that define it. Ultimately, it follows then that their nursing jobs are effectively demoted and relegated to the secondary sector and periphery of the Finnish labour market.

Research participants' inability to improve their labour market position through integration strategies such as reskilling, authorisation of foreign qualifications, and skill showcasing, which develop labour market competences as illustrated in article 3, reinforce my argument here that the migrant worker is the object of subordination. With this interpretation, then, it follows that integration fails, as article 3 illustrates, because integration interventions are mis-targeted. Effective integration would have to target whatever makes it possible to subordinate certain groups of third country national migrants in the Finnish labour market. This analysis identifies targets such as factors that make it possible to disregard some migrants' educational qualifications and labour market competences, even when obtained in Finland.

In the next section, I shift focus to the processes of integration through which research participants' subordinate position in the Finnish labour market comes to life.

4.1.2 The making of a working underclass: The productive role of a legal status regime, labour market segmentation, and migrant agency

In this section, I draw on the theorisation of economic citizenship's structuring role in person-community relations in contemporary capitalist societies as developed in article 1. Here I unpack the structural processes through which research participants are constructed as a differentiated class of workers and subordinated in the Finnish labour market. The discussion expounds a key finding across articles 2, 3, and 4. The discussion also leans into the findings of dissertation article 3 on migrants' agency-driven integration interventions to infer the role agency as personal capabilities plays in the making of research participants as a subordinate working underclass during the integration process. The discussion attends to the second research question of the dissertation with the objective of understanding the structural and personal factors that shape the apparent subordinate position research participants occupy in the Finnish labour market.

4.1.2.1 The student legal status regime (and refugee and family migrant statuses)

A second common finding that cuts across all the three empirical studies of this dissertation concerns the role the Finnish legal status regime for migration governance plays in the integration of research participants in the labour market. Specifically, the three empirical analyses show how the student legal status instrument, the temporary B residence permit, frames the labour market entry of individuals who migrated to Finland through the study route. The analysis in the third article also looks at how the legal provisions of the legal status instrument

for refugees and family migrants (the A residence permit) shape the group's labour market integration trajectory.

The legal status regime, which is the tool governing political, economic, and social relations between third country national migrants and the Finnish state, is an instantiation of economic citizenship. It features mechanisms for commodifying, marketizing, and rendering inclusion contingent. It plays a significant structuring role in participants' general integration in Finnish society. However, consistent with market rationality, the legal status regime centralises the labour market as the site where research participants negotiate their inclusion into Finnish society. It therefore turns the entire phenomenon of integration into economic integration, and more specifically, superficial labour market inclusion. This is illustrated by the labour market focus in the varied legal status instruments for all the migrant categories involved in this study. More illustrations of this in later parts of this subsection.

Alongside other labour market structuring features such as ethnicity, race, gender, etc., the legal status regime influences research participants' integration possibilities and trajectories directly and indirectly by systematically choreographing their access to varied citizenship rights. A strategic interweaving of inclusion and exclusion can be observed, as for example, in the configuration of rights included and rights excluded in the student legal status instrument. I argue that this facilitates the social process of 'producing' workers out of student migrants (see also Könönen, 2019). Through varied legal status tools such as the temporary class B residence permit for student migrants, and the continuous class A permit for family migrants and refugees, the legal status regime awards to different migrant groups different levels of access to the domains of Finnish society. In this process of differential inclusion, the legal status regime creates the structural environment and social reality in which integration happens. This turns the integration process into a social production process of the legal status regime, at least at the initial stages of integration.

Articles 2 and 4 hint at the productive role of the legal status regime using the student legal status framework for international students as a case. I expound those inferences in the following discussion, framing them through the economic citizenship lens established in article 1.

The student legal status framework in Finland, the temporary B residence permit, strongly featured the economic citizenship principles of contingent inclusion, commodification, and marketisation of inclusion. The legal status gave third country national migrants the right to study in Finland, however, the right was very stringently controlled. The control measures introduced the element of contingency that made the right uncertain and conditional. The right to live and study in Finland was designed to be renewed yearly for as long as a student was pursuing an educational qualification in Finland. To renew it, student had to fulfil some relatively steep socio-economic conditions. Students had to have at least 6,720 Euros in their personal bank account, avail proof of progress in studies, and have their own private health insurance. Furthermore, the legal status did not include any political rights, or social and welfare rights such as

unemployment benefits, income transfers, or study allowances. Therefore, students had to either purchase the list of fundamental rights missing from their legal status, or earn them by trading their labour and skills in the Finnish labour market. Labour market participation was made possible through a right to work for up to 25 hours per week during the semester, and unlimited hours during holiday periods. Practically bereft of the fundamental rights necessary for a civilised and dignified life in Finland, the student legal status commodifies citizenship rights by turning them into commodities to be earned or bought.

The narrow design of the student legal status regime was perhaps its most effective contingency and commodification mechanism, as it ensured that holders of the right would have to depend on additional rights to be able to exploit the core right of the student legal status – the right to study in Finland. The student legal status turns the Arendtian notion of citizenship as right to have rights on its head. The student legal status does not appear to be opening doors to other fundamental rights. Instead, the fundamental rights are needed to be able to utilise the core right at all. Therefore, as the student legal status granted research participants the right to legally reside in Finland for the purpose of studying, it also attached hefty socio-economic conditions to that right, which turned the instance of migration into a quid-pro-quo exchange of study rights for labour.

At this point, the categorical boundaries of the student legal status begin to unravel. As the student migrants begin living within the operational limits of their legal status, which includes honouring the conditions of their legal status, their lived reality reveals the actual rights and demands the student legal status confers on holders. Owing to the structure of the legal status regime, student migrants are more likely than not to be working migrants as well, perhaps even more the latter than the former (c.f., Maury, 2017; Könönen, 2019).

The structural environment for integration that the student legal status created through the narrow and heavily conditioned right to study ‘forced’ all the research participants who migrated to Finland through the study pathway, 44 out of 51, to enter the Finnish labour market within the first months of their migration to Finland. The legal conditions of the status went a step further than simply turning students into workers by ‘forcing’ them into the labour market. It also indirectly but categorically demarcated the type of jobs they ended up getting, which the three empirical studies of this dissertation show to be “the bad first job”.

First, by controlling when students had to enter the Finnish labour market, the configuration of conditions of the student legal status determined which jobs students could get. Being new in the host country, students did not have Finnish labour market specific competences such as Finnish language proficiency and experience working in Finland, which are crucial for employment in Finland. Students also did not have bridging networks yet, only having rather narrow bonding social networks consisting typically of fellow student migrants and co-national migrants to help with securing a job. Having to secure a job very quickly to start accumulating the required subsistence amount, students took whatever

job had the least demands for Finland specific labour market competences that they could find through their social network. Typically, that was cleaning, nightshift newspaper delivery, and/or dishwashing. A key consideration was the possibility of getting enough working hours in the contract to ensure it could be used in lieu of the 6,720 Euro requirement during legal status renewal.

Second, by making renewal contingent on progress in studies, the legal status limited students' job options further and specifically elevated jobs with flexible time arrangements, such as nightshift newspaper delivery, evening shift school cleaning, weekend dishwashing gigs, etc. Flexible work and shift work then became the workers' preference rather than a problematic or potentially problematic employment relations practice. The result of this is that problematic employment practices between migrant workers and employers are normalised, and over time, they become institutionalised. Moreover, this happens mainly in the firms, occupations, and sectors where migrant workers are concentrated, such as the so called dull, dirty, dangerous occupations (e.g., construction, and for this study, nursing, cleaning, and food delivery). In the fourth article, it becomes apparent how the flexible and shift-work arrangement norm in the form of 0-hour contracts play a part in the subordination and differentiation of migrant nurses by treating them differently from the nurses that are hired on standard employment contracts (c.f., Siltanen & Nieminen, 2022). These kinds of differentiation can either be a starting point or reflection of labour market segmentation.

The third article introduces the social productive function of the legal status frameworks for refugees and family migrants. The first productive feature is captured in the state integration programme's near 100% focus on labour market activation of refugees and family migrants, especially in the initial five years in Finland.

Refugees and family migrants are the only migrants with the right to participate in the state sponsored integration programme from the moment of arrival in Finland. Contingency in their right to have rights is ensured by integration benefits and allowances that are tied to participation. Most, if not all refugees, for example, are likely to be fully dependent on those allowances for their livelihood. Tying allowances to participation is therefore a very effective control. Participants of the state sponsored integration programme in this study complained that the programme design limits their occupational and professional possibilities and steers them towards certain professions.

The integration programme's main focus is Finnish language training and labour market training, including workplace practice placement and skill training, often in collaboration with educational institutions. Participants faulted inadequate language training as undermining their integration into Finnish higher education, for instance. As an example, a participant with refugee status said they were unable to attain the Finnish language proficiency level that would support their admission into a desired degree programme at a Finnish university (see Ndomo & Lillie, p. 173). Additionally, participants felt that they were steered to certain professions through workplace practice placements as well as the skill

training options offered to them. Indirectly, the language limitations and therefore needs that are ignored by the integration programme determine participants' future labour market opportunities. Similar to student migrants, participants of the integration programme were headed for, or were already locked into "the bad first job" occupations in nursing or the restaurant industry (see Ndomo & Lillie, 2023 for illustration).

Though research participants belonged to different legal status categories and had different legal right endowments at the beginning of their migration, they all end up integrating in Finland through the labour market in the same way, and through the same 'class' of work. I attribute this outcome to the productive or constructive function of the legal status regime which, as discussed here and illustrated in articles 2, 3, and 4, creates structural conditions that not only make labour market participation inevitable, but also decides the category of jobs through which the participation happens. Thus, the legal status regime turns refugees, family, and student migrants not only into workers, but a differentiated class of workers. They are 'forced' to be fit for "the bad first job", and are then subordinated and relegated to a peripheral position by the status value of "the bad first job".

4.1.2.2 Labour market segmentation

Labour market segmentation is the other structural factor helping to construct or produce the group of migrants participating in this study as a subordinate, alternative, working class in the Finnish labour market. In a segmented labour market, distribution of occupational opportunities and rewards is not based on a meritocratic basis of productivity, but rather on a configuration of socio-economic, cultural, and political factors such as migrancy, legal status, nationality, ethnicity, gender etc. Therefore, labour market segmentation builds on, embeds, and multiplies differences between people in its process of 'making' people into specific kinds of workers to help meet productive goals of the economy. Labour market segmentation is principally discriminative and therefore applies differential inclusion techniques.

Whether the differential inclusion of my research participants began because of an already segmented labour market, or because of the distinctions upheld and created by the legal status regime, is not determined in this research. Nonetheless, the two structures, labour market segmentation and the legal status regime, impact the labour market position of my research participants by hindering occupational mobility and therefore consolidating "the bad first job" as the typical migrant job.

The analyses in article 3 and 4 both illustrate the segmented or differential inclusion of research participants by occupation. They show research participants being concentrated in a set of low-status, menial, service sector occupations and roles, which occupy a subordinate position in the job hierarchy. By exploiting the integration environment created by the legal status regime, some employers positioned themselves strategically to absorb student workers

and integration programme participants through varied strategies, some of which proved harmful to migrants' labour market integration in the long run.

For instance, the Finnish mail delivery company POSTI grew popular among student migrants for offering students relatively long-term and sometimes even permanent employment contracts that they could use for permit renewal or to transition to a different legal status entirely. Subcontractor service firms in healthcare, cleaning, and housekeeping have also positioned themselves as student migrant-friendly employers, while migrant-owned restaurants have targeted integration programme participants in cooperation with local employment offices (see Wahlbeck, 2007; and also, Ollus, 2016 a, b). As a result, a specific type of employer, a specific job profile, or labour market sector, becomes associated with student migrants as workers and vice versa, initiating or reinforcing occupational segmentation. What occupational segmentation also means is a class division which, in the context of this research, is the distinction of a subordinate working underclass.

4.1.2.3 Migrant agency

A final impact of labour market segmentation on the subordination of research participants interlinks with the participants' own agency, especially in the form of resilience. In article 3, I analysed research participants' individual and personal level interventions aimed at improving their labour market position, and especially focused on efforts to exit "the bad first job". The interventions happened at three levels: resilience, reworking, and resistance (adapted from Katz, 2004). The main finding of that analysis was that the individual agency-based integration efforts were incapable of eliminating or allowing participants to manoeuvre through the barriers that adversely affected their integration and labour market position, and relegated them to "the bad first job".

Cross-sector immobility, a feature of labour market segmentation, is perhaps best exemplified by the failure of participants' reworking strategies targeted at occupational mobility. Articles 3 and 4 illustrate this through the case of the widely practiced industry-targeted reskilling into the labour shortage beset nursing profession (see also Piore, 1979; Ryan, 1981; Waldinger & Lichter, 2003). Moreover, professional disconnect between "the bad first job" and participants' desired jobs eliminate the possibility of mobility through occupational ladders. There are no realistic cross-profession mobility ladders between cleaning and cloud engineering, or even between geriatric care and operation room nurse. Therefore, in this way, labour market segmentation helps to make "the bad first job", as well as other jobs with subordinate terms of employment and working conditions, the typical job for research participants.

Research participants' contribution to their own subordination and persistence of "the bad first job" can be attributed to the occasionally counterintuitive function of resilience, and to some extent, reworking. Through resilience and reworking, research participants took sole responsibility for their integration. One such responsibility is withstanding whatever adversities came from "the bad first job" and its subordinate position in the labour market, and/or

manoeuvring structural barriers using their own human and social resources. Participants' focus on manoeuvring or withstanding labour market adversities also meant that any integration success left problematic labour market structures and practices unchallenged, and perhaps even normalised. Therefore, integration actors that are quick to reify resilience and migrant agency fortify a problematic integration and labour market structure where a group of migrants are systematically subordinated to the periphery of the labour market.

A key influence over the problematic integration structure or environment created partly by the legal status regime and labour market segmentation comes from Finland's official approach to migrant integration. Aside from its heavy labour market orientation, the norm in contemporary capitalist societies, the current programme's target group excludes two key population groups – student migrants and the so-called labour migrants. As the three empirical studies of this dissertation have illustrated, international student migrants fit, and live as much or even more, within the worker or labour legal status group. Therefore, they need and deserve to be supported in their labour market integration just as other population groups in Finland. As the findings of article III illustrate, the absence of comprehensive integration support capable of countering the structural barriers student migrants confront in the Finnish labour market contributes to their subordination.

In summary, the discussion in this section developed the findings of the three empirical studies of this dissertation through the lens of economic citizenship. Through abstraction, it has shown how the legal status regime, supported by labour market segmentation, as well as a counterintuitive migrant agency-driven approach to integration, constructed or produced a group of migrants as a subordinate working underclass. In the next section, I attempt a theoretical explanation for why this happens.

4.1.3 Finnish priorities: Why some highly educated migrants are misplaced in the Finnish labour market

So far, I have made a two-part argument. First, that research participants occupy a subordinate position in the Finnish labour market. Second, that the subordinate position is socially constructed, and is produced through a structural process of differential inclusion in which the legal status regime plays a central role, albeit with some help from labour market segmentation, and migrants own, potentially counterintuitive, agency-driven approach to labour market integration. Now, I turn to the last question of this dissertation, which seeks to understand why the above happens: why are individuals who are highly educated and skilled, trained in Finnish universities and educational institutions often in in-demand professions and skill areas, relegated to a few jobs and roles that are menial, low skill, low status, and professionally incongruent and subordinate to their labour market competences? A second set of questions was useful in contextualising the first and demarcating the scope of the plausible answer: why does Finland's migrant integration approach miss this migrant group's integration needs, and why is the migrant group's integration status not problematised in the national

discourse of migrant integration and retention? Perspective matters in answering these questions. For example, an individual migrant, an employer, a national government representative, or a social policy researcher all might have different interpretations for why a group of highly educated migrants are trapped in “the bad first job”. I approach the question from a structural perspective in an attempt to cover as many viewpoints as possible in my theorisation. I draw on findings from all four of the dissertation articles in this discussion.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a litmus test of sorts, revealing, among other things, the occupations, professions, and services that are essential for a well-functioning contemporary society. While this was specifically in the context of a health pandemic, a range of analytical generalisations are also possible (see also Fernández-Reino et al., 2020). In the fourth dissertation article, my colleagues and I analysed the pandemic’s impact on research participants’ labour market positions. The main finding was that the (ongoing) pandemic had not changed research participants’ subordinate labour market position, for example, by opening up previously inaccessible occupational and professional spheres of the labour market. The pandemic also did not render research participants redundant first, or at all, as anticipated, despite their positioning in the periphery of the labour market where redundancies begin during economic crises. Research participants labour market positions, in terms of both simply having an active source of income and being a subordinate working class, were relatively unchanged, neither improved nor worsened significantly. The main reason for this, I argue, is also the reason for their systematic subordination and relegation to “the bad first job”.

In the first place, participants’ jobs (nursing, cleaning, courier, etc) proved rather secure because their occupations proved essential for the continued functioning of society during the pandemic. Healthcare workers were essential at whatever capacity they worked owing to COVID-19 being a health pandemic. Hygiene maintenance, the work of cleaners, became a paramount ancillary to medical efforts to control spread of the virus while also ensuring continued production of essential products and provision of essential services.

Cleaners helped to keep factories, processing plants, hospitals, care homes, supermarkets, public transportation fleets, transportation terminals, construction sites, etc., operational throughout the pandemic. Courier workers delivering food from restaurants to consumers at home became essential for keeping the restaurant industry afloat, while also allowing the Finnish government to implement necessary social distancing regulations such as nationwide telecommuting recommendations. Courier workers also helped the most vulnerable population groups by delivering essential goods from retail stores, minimising their exposure to the virus. Lastly, as most restaurants remained open throughout the pandemic period, albeit operating on different modes such as take-away or home delivery, participants working in the sector retained their work. Many switched tasks to adapt to emergent labour and skill needs.

Article 4, an analysis of essential jobs, occupations, and professions through the lens of the pandemic period, and against the backdrop of consequential social

and economic realities of Finnish society such as population composition and state of the welfare system, reveals an insight useful for answering the third research question of this dissertation.

It reveals that the bottom tier of the service sector in Finland, the realm of “the bad first job”, is essential not only to the Finnish economy, but to the functioning of Finnish society and especially the functioning of Finnish social welfare. Services such as social work and care work aimed at the elderly and other vulnerable demographics such as people in assisted living arrangements, as well as services sustaining lifestyle consumption trends such as online and platform mediated retail, have become primary needs for a significant portion of the Finnish population. Citizens (and some legal residents) in Finland have an ideally indispensable constitutional right to subsistence and care consistent with the dignity of human life which is ensured through a variety of public social services (Ministry of social affairs and health, 2006). The goal of these is social protection and social welfare for all, and especially those in need. Within this universal social welfare arrangement, ageing members of Finnish society have a right to state provided special care services, weak universalism and marketisation notwithstanding (see discussion in Kröger, Anttonen, & Sipilä, 2003; Anttonen & Haikiö, 2011).

At the same time, the right to social welfare may mean that sections of the population have a right to access some lifestyle consumption-based services. Citizens and residents in Finland also enjoy relatively high standard and well-functioning public services such as public transportation, and clean and safe public spaces such as public transportation terminals, public schools and parks which are maintained by the state. The public and social services are essential primary services necessary for sustaining the quality of life that the Finnish state and welfare system guarantees to its citizens and residents. Further, they complement Finnish social and economic life ideals. As such, the roles, occupations, and professions that enable their provision are equally essential because of their basis in both the Finnish constitution and welfare system. Very importantly, their essentialness preceded the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic simply cast their value into sharp relief by threatening their provision.

Evidently, the consumer market for these services is domestic, and the nature of the services makes them territorially fixed, meaning that they must be produced in Finland. Being produced in Finland also means that they are subject to Finnish regulatory standards, such as quality and labour market practice standards. However, at the same time, the production or rendering of the services involves menial, arduous, and low skill tasks of low social standing in society. Proliferation of private actors in the sector has created room for competition and a moderate “race to the bottom” in terms of employment and working conditions (see Krings 2009; Szebehely & Meagher, 2018). This creates some room for inferior work and employment standards and conditions as well general precariousness within the otherwise tightly regulated Finnish labour market. Combined, these conditions and circumstances create a market for a specific type of labour or

worker that is located in Finland and is willing to take up low status jobs with inferior reward packages in the Finnish service sector.

Finnish citizens, being both highly educated and insured by the universal Finnish welfare system from socio-economic vulnerability, are unlikely to be attracted to these jobs as primary or career occupations. The socio-economic options their citizenship provides, such as lifelong access to educational opportunities, a high reservation wage, and socio-cultural capital such as cultural literacy can be leveraged to secure favourable jobs. Employers, especially private companies and firms, turn to migrants as a relatively flexible and malleable workforce to fill the low tier service sector positions that are either unpopular among Finnish workers or very tightly regulated. The main value addition of migrant workers in this sector is not cheap labour, but rather flexibility and malleability, reinforced by contingent economic citizenship conditions. However, employer practices also exploit regulatory gaps and loopholes to keep migrant workers cheap whenever possible. An example of this is the prevalent use of atypical nominal employment agreements and contracts such as 0-hour and purely shift-based contracts that circumvent costly employer obligations such as social contributions and social welfare allowances for holidays and family reasons, among others.

Based on this, I argue that some migrant workers in Finland, such as the participants of this study, are intentionally “produced”, “constructed”, or turned into a special workforce explicitly for the essential but generally unfavourable service sector jobs. This is done to secure provision of services that are a primary need of citizens and residents in Finland and are essential for the functioning of Finnish society. In sub-chapters 4.1 and 4.2, I illustrated how research participants are led into these essential jobs via a comprehensive scheme that begins with a commodification of their citizenship that makes their core legal rights contingent on their ability to work right from entry in Finland. Urgent labour market entry is reinforced through stringent residency regulation. Once in “the bad first job”, a combination of structural and personal influences in the form of occupational segmentation and migrants’ own acts of resilience and reworking keep them in “the bad first job” and out of desired core primary sector occupations. Disregard of their skills and labour market competences stems from a separate labour market structural issue – labour market segmentation, which nonetheless builds on the differentiation the legal status regime initiated. Though specific characteristics of the Finnish labour market such as tight regulation, comprehensive representation, and relevant universal social welfare provisions minimise adversity of segmentation on workers, it at the same time reinforces research participants’ subordination by locking them into “the bad first job”.

Research participants’ general inability to advance beyond secondary sector jobs or secondary sector terms of employment and working conditions, despite constantly improving their human capital (e.g., through reskilling) is contrary to classical economic and market logic. It infers social construction, and therefore, intention and purpose behind migrants’ subordination in the labour market. The legal status regime, migrant integration policies, and employer’s labour market

practices of segmentation appear to work in concert to place participants in the less favourable tier of the Finnish service sector and maintain their position there. This argument stands whether the outcome is one that is planned or serendipitous. In any case, Finnish migrant integration services ought to be aware of the integration outcomes of the varied migrant groups in Finland. Several studies of migrant integration in Finland have recorded findings on the same topics as this dissertation, such as occupational concentration, segmentation, discrimination, underemployment, etc., (see e.g., Valtonen, 2001; Shumilova et al., 2012; Ahmad, 2020b; Mathies & Karhunen, 2021).

It is important to note that very many Finns do work in the same unfavourable service sector jobs as well. However, their position differs starkly from research participants for multiple reasons, the core one being a citizenship status that offers them options and alternatives out of such jobs if desired. They also do not confront the same confluence of factors at the time of labour market entry that play a significant role in migrants' subordination. Additionally, several are in those positions by choice, while others, especially youth entering the labour market for the first time e.g., through a summer job, use those jobs instrumentally. Lastly, Finnish workers in these positions will have mobility ladders even within the sub-sector, unlike migrants, as they can grow into administrative and managerial posts, which would elevate their work-related social status.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Concluding remarks

Though the Finnish labour market is principally egalitarian, owing to a strong regulatory system, comprehensive representation, and a universalist welfare system, highly educated and skilled third country national migrants continue to disproportionately occupy low status jobs at its peripheries. This dissertation explored this dilemma, using theories of economic citizenship, labour market segmentation, and disaggregated agency to investigate the structural and personal processes of integration that shape inclusion of migrants in the Finnish labour market. The aim was to find out why some highly educated migrants in Finland spend years and even decades of their lives misplaced and trapped in jobs and occupations that are starkly inferior to their labour market competences, and incongruous with their professional and career ambitions.

Inquiry was guided by three overarching research questions that sought to: 1) determine and characterise the position of third country national migrants in the Finnish labour market; 2) identify the structural and personal factors determining that position; and 3) drawing on 1 and 2, infer why third country national migrants are in the apparent position they occupy. Research was grounded by a multidimensional conceptual framework that included concepts such as: citizenship, commodification, decommodification, differential inclusion and exclusion, internal bordering, resilience, reworking, resistance, and belonging in analysis. Qualitative research methods were used, and empirical data consisted of biographical life and work-life stories and in-depth narrative data. The main findings of the research can be presented in a three-part narrative that corresponds to the three research questions of the dissertation.

First, research finds that highly educated and skilled third country national migrants occupy a dual subordinate position in the Finnish labour market. They are subordinate both in terms of the profile of jobs that they can gain admission into, and the employment and working condition norms attached to them as a distinct class of workers. The latter means that the migrants themselves are the

object of subordination, which further implies that they carry their subordination into whichever occupations, professions, and jobs they enter. A useful illustration of this was the migrant registered nurse example, where a subordinate strand of the profession develops to adjust to the entrance of migrants into it and thereby ensure they are subordinated to the mainstream profession.

Second, this research finds that the Finnish legal status regime, and in particular the student legal status, plays a key role in the “production” or “construction” of student migrants as a distinct workforce for a specific category of jobs that already occupy a subordinate position in the job status hierarchy – “the bad first job”. The making of desperate, choiceless, labour market bound workers out of student migrants is made possible by the steep socio-economic conditions attached to the right to study that the student legal status bestows on its holders. Occupational segmentation practices of employers, and migrants’ own potentially counterintuitive approaches to integration, lock migrants into “the bad first job”, a subordinate labour market position which refers to both a category of low-status jobs and a set of inferior standards or norms of employment and working conditions. In this way, student migrants are converted into a working underclass, a distinction that persists and characterises their integration for years and even decades after exiting the student legal status. Refugees and family migrants, though holders of a different legal status with a more generous rights portfolio, also end up in the same pool of work as the student migrants. Aside from reinforcing the general argument about the constructive function of the legal status regime, the integration experience and outcomes of refugees and family migrants also implies that the characteristics the three migrant groups share, such as ethnicity and race, play a role in their subordination.

The third finding is a purely theoretical argument the research extends in an attempt to explain why a group of highly educated migrant workers are seemingly being directed to a distinct set of jobs and occupations that are incongruous with their competences and skills in a country that has categorically stated its need for highly skilled migrant workers. The argument, put simply, is that Finland needs workers to take up certain unfavourable jobs and roles that produce public and social welfare services that are essential to the wellbeing of a portion of the Finnish population. Those services are also essential to the Finnish welfare system, as they enable the welfare state to meet its obligation to citizens and residents of Finland. However, those jobs and roles are unfavourable because they are menial and low-status, making them unattractive to many. All workers with options, such as highly educated Finns with the social protection of the Finnish welfare system, can refuse them. Equally, highly educated migrants can refuse the menial, low status jobs, but not when they are denied the option to refuse, which is what the legal status regime, and later labour market segmentation help to accomplish.

Despite the strong universalist principles of the Nordic welfare regime, research has shown that migrant integration in Finland is a heavily marketised and commodified process that strongly reflects market rationality and economic

citizenship principles. For a significant portion of the migrant population consisting of student and 'labour' migrants, integration is the sole responsibility of the migrant. As a result, integration tends to be a unidirectional, bottom-up endeavour where the migrant makes several concessions on culture, class, security and more to earn membership and a right to be in Finland. Importantly, all citizenship negotiations start in the labour market. The alternative economic citizenship pathway of purchasing citizenship or residency rights is a very limited option that can only be afforded by a few wealthy people. However, even such economic citizenship is commodifying and is legally precarious.

On a practical and policy level, the crux of these findings is an incongruence in the integration objectives of migrants on the one hand and Finland as a host country, represented by relevant national institutions, on the other. The focus of Finland's state sponsored integration programmes elucidates this incongruence although not so obviously. While migrants go to great lengths in order to improve their labour market position and the work opportunities accessible to them, believing that this is possible because the norm is that inclusion can be earned through hard work, the reality for many of them is that those integration objectives are futile. Futile because, as this dissertation has shown, the structures of the legal status regime and labour market segmentation have hegemony over the integration process.

In the Finnish context that this thesis has analysed, the integration objective that structure enforces is contrary to that which migrants hold. The integration objective, it appears, is to use migrants as an alternative workforce for subordinate jobs and roles at the peripheries of the Finnish labour market. Therefore, the two stakeholders aspire towards opposite end goals. While the negative socio-economic implications affect both parties in the long run, the implications are harshest for the migrants. For as long as the incongruence remains, and Finland continues to use highly competent migrants in the wrong part of the labour market, as much as it serves Finland's essential unfavourable sector, it also results in wastage of human potential. Most important of all, it is unjust.

A reflection on the question of justice is important here, given the inference above that many migrants like the ones who participated in this study might be investing years of their lives chasing a dream that is implausible because of a hegemonic strategic migration policy. In the Finnish context, labour market regulation reduces the extent to which even a subordinate working underclass can be exploited. Wage compression ensures that a cleaner earns a decent wage that is not too disparate from a professional in a relatively better socially positioned job as, for example, a practical nurse or a research assistant working at a university. The various perks of the egalitarian Finnish labour market model might attenuate the injustice inherent in the discriminative subordination of highly educated third country nationals in the Finnish labour market in the minds of many, maybe even to the migrants themselves sometimes. However, I hope that this dissertation, by illustrating the social and economic cost that migrants pay under continuous and violent misrecognition, misplacement, and

subordination in the Finnish labour market may at the very least lead those involved in the subordination to acknowledge the injustice borne by many migrants.

5.2 Contribution of the study to academic debate

This thesis contributes insights to a number of academic debates on migration and migrants' inclusion and participation in host countries – what I have been referring to in this dissertation as integration.

At a theoretical level, this thesis contributes insights to the academic debates on the productive function of migration controls, borders, and other structures that are based on socially and legally constructed differences between people (see e.g., Balibar, 2002; De Genova, 2002; Anderson, 2010; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2012; De Genova et al., 2015; Ellis, 2015). In the context of migration, difference (real, perceived, and most importantly, constructed) is a powerful tool used to differentiate the migrant from the citizen towards all sorts of ends – cultural, political, economic, etc. The findings of this thesis on the productive role of the legal status regime fall squarely in the realm of these studies. As far as I can tell, the constructive role of the Finnish legal status regime, especially the student legal status, has not been addressed in this extent in existing research (see Maury, 2017; Könönen, 2019 for comparison).

Owing to its focus on migrants who migrated through the study pathway, this research introduces new insights and extends existing debates on social production of vulnerability to consider the exploitation potential of the international student migrant group. At the same time, due to the fuzziness of legal status categories, the findings of this research will be useful for comparative engagement with the vulnerability production debates. These studies have tended to focus on migrant groups deemed more vulnerable, and whose exploitation has already received much attention in research, such as undocumented migrants, “illegal” migrants, and migrant women domestic workers (Jayaweera & Anderson, 2008; Anderson, 2010; Palumbo & Sciarba, 2018). This research's analytical unit, highly educated and skilled migrants, is also a novelty, as studies of social construction of vulnerability and exploitation tend to focus on migrant populations that have been associated with vulnerability owing to their precarious legal standing (e.g., undocumented migrants). However, as this dissertation illustrates, other migrant categories might be just as vulnerable.

The productive role of migration controls in the making of undocumented migrants as a distinct migrant category, as well as a vulnerable and exploitable workforce for the grey economy, has received sufficient attention. However little attention has been paid to how the same migration controls, as well as market rationality-based integration programmes, create vulnerable legal migrant worker categories within or parallel to the mainstream working class. Academic discussions of guest workers, seasonal workers, and intra-EU posted workers

still do not hold the legal instruments that create those categories to account as much as studies of 'irregularisation' and 'illegalisation' do. In the Finnish context, this thesis extends the work initiated by Martin & Prokkola (2017) on the innovative ways legal structures create spaces for extreme exploitation within legal limits.

This study's theorisation of migrants' labour market position in terms of subordination rather than exclusion captures and provides an illustrative example of the concepts of differential inclusion and differential exclusion (see Castles & Kosack 1973; Castles, 1995; Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; Horton 2016). Generally, the analysis draws attention to the crucial grey area between the extremes of the inclusion-exclusion binary, as with the example of highly educated migrants who are neither fully excluded from the labour market, nor included from within. In addition, this research provides an illustration of the link between the Finnish legal status regime and the labour regimes of employers, perhaps still a very small portion of employers in the Finnish context.

The issue of migrant discrimination in the Finnish labour market has been widely studied from multiple perspectives with the consensus being that discrimination is one of the main barriers to migrant labour market integration in Finland (see e.g., Jaakkola, 2000, 2005; Valtonen, 2001; Forsander, 2003; Heikkilä, 2005; Koskela, 2014, 2019; Ahmad, 2005, 2020). This research engages and adds new analytical insights to discrete topics in these discrimination debates.

First, in terms of research foci, this dissertation extends existing debates to include the experiences of highly educated and skilled migrants, especially those that do not naturally fit in the assumed normative mould of the highly educated and skilled migrant or 'expat'. Ahmad's (2020a, b) correspondence experiment of ethnic discrimination in the Finnish labour market addressed multiple discrimination-related topics. However, he focused only on a low-skilled to medium-skilled migrant workforce seeking entry into matching 'unskilled', low-skilled and medium-skilled occupations. His analysis found strong evidence of ethnic bias in Finnish recruiters' hiring decisions where Finns were most favoured, followed by culturally 'similar' British background migrants. Ethnicity groups considered culturally distant such as Iraqis and Somalis were the most discriminated against. This dissertation extends the work that Ahmad (2020a, b) began by focusing on how discrimination plays out in the integration of highly educated and skilled third country national migrants in highly skilled occupations in the primary sector of the Finnish labour market. Based on qualitative data, the analysis contributes a migrant perspective.

Additionally, this dissertation continues the discussion Ahmad (2020b) starts on ethnicity-mediated valuation of migrant competences and returns on locally acquired qualifications for migrants in the Finnish labour market. In exploring the position migrants occupy in the Finnish labour market, the dissertation theorises that migrants' ascribed features, including ethnicity, nationality, and race, play a role in their subordination in the labour market. Findings in both studies converge insofar as the value of locally acquired

qualifications appear to be dependent on the bearer's biography and socio-cultural position. The implication is that the ascribed value attached to individual workers can carry greater weight in labour market integration than labour market competences. In other words, who one is, or is perceived to be, based on ascribed features such as ethnicity and nationality, is more important in their valuation as a worker or professional than their labour market competences (c.f. Koskela, 2014; 2019). The dissertation illustrates the extent to which this discriminative norm impacts the labour market integration of highly educated third country national migrants through subordination and occupational segmentation practices with illustrative examples.

As research has focused on migrants' inability to leverage labour market competences, including locally acquired human capital, the analysis adds to critiques of the naive neoclassical theories that perceived labour markets as undifferentiated arenas of free choice and fair distribution of opportunities. Further, the dissertation contributes to the labour market segmentation school of thought. While strong labour market regulation manages to stave off extreme wage-exploitation-based segmentation, occupational segmentation does occur.

5.3 A comment for policy

The policy questions that the findings of this dissertation elicit centre around the apparently contradictory integration objectives of the highly educated third country national migrants who participated in this study, and the Finnish migration policy objective. What is possible in terms of policy intervention when what migrants want and what the host country state wants are at odds? The contradiction in integration objectives that this dissertation spotlights may not be visible to migrants and other stakeholders supporting their integration agenda such as civil society. One reason why this happens is because migration policies are not always explicit and honest about their objective for a number of reasons (Castles, 2004a). The link this dissertation reveals between the Finnish legal status regime, the subordination of highly educated migrants in the labour market, and the failure of the official integration programme to support student migrants' integration despite their labour market involvement, changes the way Finnish migration policy performance *vis à vis* poorly integrated third country national migrants should be interpreted. The dissertation shows that Finnish migration policy is effective in as far as its meeting an objective; but it also shows that Finnish migration policy is not explicit and honest about its objectives and may have a hidden agenda. Any policy intervention should begin from this understanding, followed by acknowledging and making explicit the true objectives of the Finnish migration policy. According to Castles (2004b), effective migration policies are honest and explicit about their objectives and are fair. Fair migration policies, Castles (2004b) suggests, should be collaboratively designed in a process that includes all stakeholders whose lives will be impacted by the policy. A consensus must be reached among stakeholders about its fairness.

However unlikely, only this magnitude of reform is proportionate to the structural strength of the migration policy dilemma this thesis reveals of the Finnish case. As a compromise to cooperatively designed policy, I suggest an easier policy recommendation. Third country national migrants in Finland should be made aware of the true objectives of the Finnish migration policy so that if any of them decide to stay in Finland and confront their subordination, it will be an informed choice.

5.4 Areas for future research – what next from an academic point of view

This research has raised many new questions ranging from theory and methodology to analytical foci, that could be investigated in future studies. Specifically, two aspects of this research could be considered for further investigation: the first concerns the why question (research question three of this summary article), and the second concerns methodological approach and scope.

The question of why a group of highly educated third country national migrants are subordinated in the Finnish labour market is multidimensional and can therefore be probed from many perspectives. Understanding why migrants are not able to exit “the bad first job” is important to understanding the phenomenon of their subordination. To this end, a study focusing specifically on the transition period when students complete their studies and transition fully into the labour market as full-time members of the workforce would be valuable. Such a study would be able to identify discrete labour market integration barriers hindering the transition, as well as enablers that can be developed further to improve that transition. In the current study, the transition period is considered, albeit as part of a longer labour market integration trajectory. Additionally, the data is limited to workers’ perspectives only. A future study should include both the perspective of workers on one hand, and employers and recruiters on the other. Methodologically, a quantitative experimental approach such as a correspondence study would add the value of identifying specific ‘variables’ shaping migrants’ entry or failure of, into professions and occupations of choice for which they are qualified.

The theoretical value of the analysis and interpretation of the productive function of the student legal status in Finland would be reinforced by comparative insights. Future studies would extend the current one by analysing the productive function of student legal status instruments in two or more different country contexts for comparative insights. One of the comparative contexts should be relatively similar to Finland in terms of migration policy, labour market regulation, and welfare system, and should specifically have a similar international student legal status regime. The other context can be chosen freely. An extended understanding of the phenomenon which will be achieved

with additional analytical perspectives is necessary if the findings of this study are to be developed into sound theoretical conclusions.

Generally, there seems to be room to engage migrant integration issues more critically and, preferably, using a social justice lens in order to spotlight hidden systemic and structural barriers that are being missed by current and past studies. This is especially relevant because of the transformations in current international migration trends, where more people are moving from the Global South to the Global North. Additionally, the world of work is transforming significantly under the influence of the green and digital transitions, alongside new non-standard work forms such as platform work. Migrant workers are already caught in between these multiple transformations. Lastly, complicated histories between nations, regions, and people, including histories of colonialism and its traces in neo-colonialism and new nationalisms are inevitably intertwined in the migration and integration process. Without intentional consideration, such histories can easily be repeated in the context of migrant integration through discriminative practices such as prejudice-based subordination as instantiated in labour market segmentation. Economic citizenship that frames migration policies today embodies and enforces, uncritically, the inherently divisive market rationality that adheres to historical but hegemonically determined and socially constructed differences between people across nationality, race, ethnicity lines and more. Future research should be critical because the quality of many lives depends on it.

LYHENNELMÄ (SUMMARY IN FINNISH)

Vaikka Suomen työmarkkinat ovat periaatteessa tasa-arvoiset vahvan sääntelyjärjestelmän, kattavan edustuksen ja universalistisen hyvinvointijärjestelmän ansiosta, silti korkeasti koulutetut ja ammattitaitoiset EU:n ulkopuoliset kansalaiset työskentelevät edelleen suhteettoman paljon matalan aseman ja matalan osaamistason työpaikoissa työmarkkinoiden reuna-alueilla. Tässä väitöskirjassa tutkitaan yllä mainittua dilemmaa käyttämällä kansalaisuuden, työmarkkinoiden segmentoitumisen ja eriytetyn toimijuuden teorioita tulkittaessa maahanmuuttajien omakohtaisia kokemuksia liittyen heidän integroitumiseensa työmarkkinoilla.

Tämän tutkimuksen tärkein havainto on, että suomalainen maahanmuuttajien oikeudellista asemaa koskeva järjestelmä muodostaa maahanmuuttajista erilaisen työntekijäluokan, joka voidaan sulkea, ja suljetaan, tasa-arvoisen suomalaisen työmarkkina- ja hyvinvointijärjestelmän suojelun ja etuoikeuksien ulkopuolelle. Näin ollen, maahanmuuttajat integroituvat työmarkkinoille eri tavoin sekä epätasa-arvoisesti. Oikeudellisen aseman järjestelmä tarjoaa kehyksen, joka hyödykkeistää maahanmuuttajia ja markkinoi kotoutumista, ehdollisen taloudellisen kansalaisuuden periaatteen kautta. Tässä kehyksessä maahanmuuttajista muodostetaan, sosiaalisesti markkina sidonnainen työvoima. Erityiset oikeudellisen aseman koskevat ehdot, esimerkiksi lyhyet määräaikaiset oleskeluluvat (1 vuosi), jotka voidaan uusida vain täyttämällä tiukat aineelliset vaatimukset, edesauttavat ”muodostamaan” työvoimaa, joka on epätoivoinen, haavoittuva, joustava ja sinnikäs. He ovat työntekijöitä, jotka ovat valmiita ottamaan vastaan ja hyväksymään kaikenlaisen työn, sekä mitkä tahansa työehdot ja työolot täyttääkseen lakisääteiset velvoitteensa. Tämä puolestaan aiheuttaa ammatillisen segmentoitumisen. Toisin sanoen tiettyjä maahanmuuttajaryhmiä esiintyy yleensä enemmän tiettyntyyppisissä työpaikoissa, joka johtuu muun muassa heidän oikeudellisesta asemastaan, muuttoliikkeestä, etnisestä alkuperästä ja eri kansallisuuksista.

Ehdollisen taloudellisen kansalaisuuden markkinarationaalisuus, joka kanavoii maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisen pääasiassa työmarkkinoiden kautta, siirtää myös päävastuun kotouttamisesta yksittäisille maahanmuuttajille. Tämä siirtymä muuttaa kotouttamisen useimmissa tapauksissa yksisuuntaiseksi alhaalta ylöspäin suuntautuvaksi liikkeeksi, joka perustuu yksittäisten maahanmuuttajien inhimillisen ja sosiaalisen pääoman muodossa olevaan agenttikapasiteettiin. Kuten sammakko kiehvassa sammakkosadussa, maahanmuuttajat käyttävät erilaisia selviytymistaktiikoita, esimerkiksi instrumentaalista rationalisointia ja kaksoiskehysviittauksia, sekä uudelleentyöstämisstrategioita, selviytyäkseen työmarkkinoilla esiintyvistä vastoinkäymisistä, kuten jatkuvasta ”huonosta ensimmäisestä työpaikasta” ja yleisestä syrjinnästä. Näitä ovat muun muassa ”uudelleen kouluttautuminen” ja ”taitojen esittely”. Maahanmuuttajien yksilölliset resilienssi- ja uudelleenkäsittelytoimet eivät kuitenkaan monestakaan syystä riitä haastamaan tai muuttamaan niitä syrjiviä institutionaalisia sääntöjä, normeja ja rakenteita, jotka ovat maahanmuuttajien työmarkkinoiden perustana

Suomessa. Maahanmuuttajien käyttämät toimenpiteet saattavat tahtomattaan jopa vahvistaa näitä sääntöjä ja normeja. Toisaalta, yksilötason vastarinnalla ei ole riittävästi vaikutusvaltaa, jota tarvitaan vastahegemoniseen uhmaan.

Lisäksi analyysi laajentaa yhtä mahdollista syytä maahanmuuttajien erilaiselle ja epätasa-arvoiselle integroitumiselle Suomen ainutlaatuisilla työmarkkinoilla. Palvelualan luonnollinen kaksoissegmentointi palvelujen välillä, ne joiden tuotemarkkinat ovat alueellisesti sidotut Suomeen ja ne joiden markkinat ovat kansainvälisiä. Työvoiman segmentointia esiintyy matalan aseman, matalan ja keskitason ammattitaitoa vaativien vähäpätöisten työpaikkojen tai rutiinitehtävien sekä korkean aseman ja korkeaa ammattitaitoa vaativien työpaikkojen välillä. Palvelut, kuten vanhustenhoito, julkinen liikenne tai julkisten tilojen siivous, ovat välttämättömiä Suomen nykyisen väestörakenteen ja suomalaisen sosiaaliturvan tasa-arvoisten ihanteiden ja lupauksen vuoksi. Ne ovat myös paikallisia ja sijaintikohtaisia, joten ne edellyttävät paikallista sekä paikalle saapuvaa työvoimaa. Siivouksen ja yksilöllisen vanhustenhoidon kaltaiset työt eivät kuitenkaan välttämättä ole houkuttelevia suurimmalle osalle Suomen kansalaisista, joilla on korkeankoulutustasonsa ja sosiaalisten kansalais- ja hyvinvointioikeuksiensa ansiosta laajemmat työmarkkinamahdollisuudet ja -vaihtoehdot. Tässä tutkimuksessa esitetään, että maahanmuuttajat, jotka ovat sosiaalisesti ja oikeudellisesti epätoivoisia ja joilla on rajoitetut sosioekonomiset vapaudet, joutuvat helposti ja ”luonnollisesti” työmarkkinoilla tarjolla oleviin avoimiin työpaikkoihin, kuten esimerkiksi suomalaisen hoitohenkilöstön tietyissä ryhmissä vallitsevaan työvoimapulaan.

Tämä tutkimus osallistuu muutamaankin akateemiseen keskusteluun. Vahvin panos liittyy ”maahanmuuttajistumiseen” koskevaan keskusteluun siitä, miten maahanmuuttajista kootaan erilainen olemisen kategoria monipuolisten rakenteellisten välineiden avulla, rooleista, joita eri sidosryhmillä on tässä prosessissa, ja tämän sosiaalisen rakennustyön moninaisista vaikutuksista. Tämän tutkimuksen tärkein havainto, joka koskee suomalaisen oikeudellisen aseman rakentavaa roolia ja sen vaikutuksia maahanmuuttajien kotoutumiseen, on itsessään potentiaalinen uusi oivallus. Tämä havainto perustuu pohjoismaisen työmarkkinamallin ja pohjoismaisen universalistisen hyvinvointijärjestelmän näkökulmaan. Tutkimus edistää myös keskustelua maahanmuuttajien syrjinnästä suomalaisilla työmarkkinoilla uusilla näkemyksillä korkeasti koulutettujen ja ammattitaitoitien (Suomessa koulutettujen) maahanmuuttajien rakenteellisesta esteestä Suomen työmarkkinoiden ytimessä. Tutkimuksessa keskitytään korkeasti koulutettuihin ja ammattitaitoisiin maahanmuuttajiin, joita on koulutettu vastaanottavassa maassa. Väitöskirjan tulokset voivat tukea tutkimusta, jossa kyseenalaiseksi tetaan väitteet inhimillisen pääomanpuutteesta ja osaamisvajeesta syynä maahanmuuttajien yhteisten huonojen työmarkkinoille integroitumisen aiheuttajina. Päätelmiä voidaan soveltaa myös keskusteluihin, jotka koskevat toisen sukupolven maahanmuuttajien ahdinkoa sekä koulutuksessa että työmarkkinoilla. Poliitiikan osalta tämän tutkimuksen tulokset sopivat tieteelliseen keskusteluun maahanmuutto- ja kotouttamispolitiikan tehokkuudesta (tai tehottomuudesta).

Tutkimuksessa käytettiin kvalitatiivista metodologiaa, jota kehystivät sosiaalisen oikeudenmukaisuuden maailmankuva ja konstruktivistinen paradigma. Aineisto koostui pääasiassa rikkaista elämäkerrallisista kertomuksista ja työtarinoista, jotka valittiin siksi, että ne kykenivät vangitsemaan pitkittäisnäkökulman, joka ylittää tutkimuksen nykyisen ajan ja paikan realiteetit. Haastatteluja kerättiin yhteensä 51, ja niitä täydennettiin etnografisilla kenttämuistiinpanoilla, jotka tehtiin kenttähavainnoista ja maahanmuuttajien kanssa maahanmuuttoa ja kotouttamista käsittelevillä julkisilla keskustelufoorumeilla. Aineiston analyysi oli induktiivista, pitkälti aineistolähtöistä, ja siinä kunnioitettiin osallistujien kertomuksissa esiintyviä paikallisia tulkintateorioita. Analyttisinä työvälineinä käytettiin asianmukaisia teoreettisia käsitteitä, kuten eriytettyä toimijuutta, käännekohtia ja oivalluksia, helpottamaan kriittistä, herkkää ja osallistavaa vuoropuhelua teorian ja aineiston välillä.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS

I

MIGRANTS' ECONOMIC INTEGRATION : PROBLEMATISING ECONOMIC CITIZENSHIP

by

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9. Migrants' economic integration: problematizing economic citizenship

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive migrant integration is a common policy objective; however, it has a complex relationship with economic citizenship. In practice, migrant integration from both the side of the migrant and that of the host society is shaped by economic market rationality and its principles of valuation. Migrant economic integration is complex, dynamic, contextual and intersectional, riven by tensions between contradictory ideals and practices. On the one hand, international labour migrants operate in an environment that structurally lies between the national and the global, so that social integration is not necessarily an objective for them, complicating their socio-political position of belonging. On the other hand, dedicated efforts to include migrants in their host societies through strategic integration activities usually relate host country belonging to labour market success, commodifying citizenship. There are inherent contradictions in this commodification, which we explore, using T.H. Marshall's theorisation of evolving and inclusive democratic citizenship as a point of departure.

Citizenship is belonging in a community, which in the modern world means belonging in a capitalist class-based society. Therefore, citizenship is, at its basis, economic: egalitarian in principle but hierarchical in practice. As Dahrendorf (1974) points out, the etymology of 'citizen' is suggestive of a member of the bourgeoisie. The existence of the bourgeoisie requires a subaltern working class, thus incorporating political and economic inequality into the structure of capitalist citizenship. In 'Citizenship and social class, 1950', T.H. Marshall's insight was that through political struggle, there has been an extension of the notion of citizen to include the working class in Western democracies (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992). However, 70 years later, the struggle for universal citizenship remains incomplete, even as marketisation, racism (Somers, 2008) and globalization (Ong, 2006) undermine progress toward universalism. The main reason for this is the close association between citizenship and the creation and enforcement of boundaries and borders. There is a fundamental tension within a world that is predominantly structurally 'national', but experiences growing global and transnational mobility of people (Benhabib, 2005). As society becomes less nationally insular, more global and transnational, so do labour markets, and capital actively exploits the terrain of state sovereignty to carve out new, deregulated realms (Palan, 2003). In this context, access to national citizenship becomes an important structuring element in access to rights for migrant workers in globalizing labour markets, while citizenship becomes an important element in capitalist development and class struggle.

Migrant integration, or conversely, exclusion, should be interpreted in light of this struggle to extend or restrict citizenship. Integration is often seen as occurring along a spectrum or timeline; migrants move along it as various milestones are achieved, becoming ever more integrated. As Ager and Strang show, formal citizenship in a host country is in many respects con-

sidered an endpoint, or at least a milestone in migrant integration, as are developments such as acquisition of host country social ties, language skills and cultural skills. Similarly, obtaining employment and secure economic status (which are not the same thing) are also considered to be indicators of migrant integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). However, this idea of citizenship moving along a line until the migrant has 'paid their dues' and becomes a member of society in good standing does not match the hierarchical and contingent structure of citizenship practice. In practice, there are individuals whose wealth, ethnicity, skills, high-value passport and status let them travel freely and enjoy extensive rights wherever they go; while others, by dint of their social class, low-value passport, low-value skills and ethnicity, are at best tolerated, if not excluded, when they migrate. This exclusion can be permanent, and indeed also affect the second generation of migrants (Kempton, 2002). Thus citizenship, alongside other labour market structuring factors such as age, race, gender and class, is both a cause and a reflection of labour market segmentation and variegated integration.

This means that it is important to deconstruct the idea of 'economic citizenship'; which, however, is complex, as it embeds contradictory concepts such as equality and class stratification, and because the practice of citizenship is embedded in the structure of capitalism and the nation-state system (Polanyi, 1957; Somers, 2008). Global capitalism is at once open, fluid and transnational, yet riven by inequalities along class, ethnic and national lines. Economic citizenship embeds within it tensions between a global society built on nation-states with defined territories, boundaries and identities, and global capitalism which crosses these boundaries while reducing human value to an economic calculus. Further, territorial, social and ethnic hierarchies interact in ways that define national citizenship unequally between social groups, but also decommodify and embed social solidarity within groups. Thus, economic citizenship requires and enables an individual's right to produce, consume and invest; that is, to engage in 'market citizenship'. Global capitalism's hierarchies interact with the hierarchies of national citizenship, but are not identical to them. Notably, migrants are an exception to the normal status of citizenship; and more than other social groups, migrants are a useful category for our purposes because of the way their citizenship is readily commodified into *Homo economicus*, or perfect market-based citizens.

Marshall's historical progression (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992), first commodifying individuals through civil rights and eventually decommodifying them through social rights, allows us to theorise integration as decommodification, further linking integration and citizenship, as follows. Civil rights enable market freedoms, upon which capitalist societies are built, and which require and assume individual autonomy and equality before the law. Market freedoms, however, destabilize society, creating risks and inequalities (Polanyi, 1957), so that realising egalitarian citizenship under capitalism requires social citizenship, which can only be realised through political struggle built on the power base created through industrial citizenship. Industrial citizenship, in its turn, results from collective attempts to realise the aspiration of citizenship in a capitalist context, but functions at odds with societies' market basis. However, the normative and institutional foundations of citizenship are built within the confines of insular nation-states, which mean that the categories and concepts make sense in their preconceived contexts, but are challenged in various ways when transnational influences such as migrants enter the equation. The remainder of this chapter is organised into five sections exploring the complex and dynamic process of migrant economic integration through economic citizenship, followed by concluding remarks.

VALORISATION OF MIGRANTS AS MARKET CITIZENS

In Arendtian terms, an entirely market-based conception of the citizen sees individuals only as economic actors who lack an inherent right to have rights, except the right to buy, sell and make contracts. Migrants fit the *Homo economicus* model because they must 'earn' their rights through economic success and/or economic exploitability. It is in this vein that market citizenship develops as an alternative relational arrangement based on contingent acceptance, as opposed to the full community membership requisite for substantive citizenship, which bestows identity, rights, responsibilities and participation (Isin & Turner, 2002; Somers, 2008).

Labour markets have an explicit role in valuing migrants; most migrants are labour migrants, and if they arrive legally they do so on visas granted based on the labour market value of their work. The spectrum of international migrants is diverse; however, roughly 70 per cent of the international migrant stock consists of humanitarian migrants (25.9 million), and economic migrants (164 million) whose integration efforts focus mainly on economic citizenship (IOM, 2020). Humanitarian migrants are in principle not so explicitly commodified, but rather are allowed entry on the basis of their need for personal safety. In fact, they are sometimes excluded from the labour market for a considerable time, until their asylum applications are decided upon (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). Nonetheless, being allocated to an unemployed underclass dependent on social assistance and illegal work often places them within the labour market and its hierarchies in the long term. Lacking nationally specific socio-economic capital for inclusion, migrants' labour market capacity becomes the core attribute defining their relationship with the host society (Anderson, 2013).

Migrants perceived as having high-status skills have many options of where they can travel and live, while those with lower status and lower demand skills have fewer and less attractive options (Shachar, 2006, p. 151). Ong emphasises that 'market norms of citizenship' and governance ensure that the security, well-being and quality of life of citizens are dependent on their capacity as free individuals to confront globalised insecurities by making calculations and investments in their lives (Ong, 2006). This means that access to rights for the migrant is closely correlated to class status. Because migrants who are highly valued in labour markets are likely to have a more favourable visa status than those who are not, they are also likely to have more social protections than those in more precarious and informal situations (Khoo et al., 2005).

The 'capacities' mentioned by Ong refer partly to skills and abilities; however, labour markets are also structured by national, ethnic and gender segmentation. What is defined as 'skill' is also not independent of who holds it, and whether they are deemed an appropriate type of individual for a particular job. One such example is the monopolised and racialised ownership and use of the English language as social capital among native English-speaking migrants in Taiwan (Lan, 2011). Thus, there is a sorting of who can be a global cosmopolitan citizen, based on an intersection of class, country of origin, ethnicity and gender, all of which affect an individual's perceived suitability for particular work: their market value. Markets serve to legitimate the results of this sorting, concealing the inequalities and deviations from the meritocratic principles underneath by turning the hierarchies into technical exercises, concealing the role of differential access to citizenship. An example is the division of labour among migrants in London on the basis of institutionally discriminative practices (Wills et al., 2009, p. 259). This market power, however, is not distributed according to norms of fairness, equality or even merit, but rather carries forward historical inequities in power and resources

within and between societies. Market citizenship follows a model of human behaviour based on the economic rationality of *Homo economicus*, but whether this enables freedom, autonomy and influence, or demands compliance with restrictive market norms, depends on where in the hierarchy one falls.

Market citizenship is not and never has been a completely realised project, but is nonetheless a foundational principle of contemporary capitalist society, already beginning from the formative early modern period. Margaret Somers (2008) charts how, historically, the development of citizenship as civil rights, and the economic rights embedded therein, created an environment in which capitalism thrived and drove the growth of market mechanisms as the predominant ideational regime in society. Countries adopting market regulation also became the hegemonic powers of the colonial period, and even until today continue to export the idea of markets as the fundamental regulatory institution of society. Pre-capitalist community ties which were non-contractual, and thus not requiring individual consent, changed as the growth of capitalism transformed community membership from non-contractual reciprocal ties to market-based citizenship *quid pro quo* exchanges. In sum, citizenship marketisation destroyed pre-capitalist social hierarchies and categories, while also creating new ones.

Marshall and Somers argue that citizenship should involve full social and political inclusion as a foundational necessity, which would seem to necessitate a countermovement to pure market-based citizenship regimes (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992, p. 16; Somers, 2008, p. 156), because market citizenship falls short of 'substantive citizenship' (see also Delanty, 1997). Substantive citizenship denotes a richer delimitation of citizenship that exceeds a passive rights-bestowing status; rather, it is an active (Delanty, 1997, p. 286) social process (Isin & Turner, 2002, p. 4) encompassing duties, responsibilities, participation and identity, all as different aspects of what membership in a community entails (Delanty, 1997; Holston, 1998, p. 50). The solution in modern capitalist welfare states has been 'decommodification', which happens when large-scale national social programmes (for example, pension and unemployment benefits) successfully emancipate the labour force from sole dependency on the labour market to sustain a basic standard of living (Room, 2000, p. 333). Essentially, decommodification reduces workers' dependence on their labour, and thus on the market. Paradoxically, decommodification gives both capital and the working class in migrant host countries reasons to exclude outsiders from social rights. Native workers may want to exclude migrants to prevent their accessing benefits, which could make the programmes more expensive; while capital may want to exclude migrants from social citizenship, while granting labour market access, because in doing so this creates a fully commodified group which is desperate and entirely dependent on work to live.

As Piore (1979) observed in his seminal work on labour migration, recent labour migrants find themselves in a position similar to that of *Homo economicus* because they enter a new host country as supplicants whose access to rights is based on market value. Thus, although human behaviour does not normally conform to economic rationality, it is possible to compel individuals to conform to economic rationality by stripping them of alternatives. When migrating, a person with valued skills and/or wealth retains the power to refuse undesirable constraints on their rights; but poor, unskilled workers' migration opportunities are often bound up with onerous conditions. For labour migrants, the moment of mobility is usually a time of pure market citizenship, and nothing else.

TEMPORARY MIGRATION

Temporary international labour migration is generally on the rise and enjoys widespread support of rich Western countries' employers, multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organization, and the majority of migration–development discourse proponents (Costa & Martin, 2018; Lenard & Straehle, 2012). It makes for a half-way compromise between full-blown liberalisation of global labour markets, and nation-state sovereignty and border control demands (Rosewarne, 2010). Temporary labour migration is therefore made out as a win–win arrangement where the rich Western countries receive labour from developing and transitioning countries, which in turn receive export income through economic remittances, to which their development is tied. At this macro level of negotiation, temporariness is legitimised by transnationalism, circular migration and development rhetoric (Costa & Martin, 2018). For this reason, many migration systems exist that are temporary by design.

The moment of mobility from one context to another provides a moment of partial statelessness, during which an unintegrated migrant is vulnerable to exploitation, giving both states and employers an incentive to extend this moment. For example, Berntsen writes about Polish warehouse workers in the Netherlands, whose employers design temporary contracts which oblige them to return to Poland before their temporary status becomes permanent, creating a circular migration pattern which undermines the Dutch sectoral collective agreement (Berntsen, 2015). Market forces are introduced through the transnationalisation of the labour market regulation and the alienability of labour rights during mobility (Piore, 1979; Lillie 2016). Temporary labour migration programmes circumvent international human rights norms and labour standards, leading to extreme vulnerabilities and exploitation, thereby furthering the commodification of temporary labour migrants (Costa & Martin 2018, pp. 38–41). Migrant workers on temporary labour contracts face different labour laws and regulations, and commonly bear social risks related to self-employment, lack of access to work-related benefits and exclusion from minimum wage regulations (*ibid.*, p. 3).

From the extreme *kefala* residence regime in the Middle East, to employer-tied residential permits for domestic workers in the UK, temporary labour migration programmes ensure social exclusion of migrants from the host country as well as intermittent but repeated absence from the country of origin (Hahamovitch, 2003; Surak, 2013). Typically, temporary labour migrants' mobility within the host country is characterised by strict regulations, such as prohibition against changing employers, which is an infringement of civil freedom – and belies the theoretical autonomy of market citizenship. Additionally, human rights such as the right to family life are hindered by immigration regulations on family reunification, and settlement or naturalisation (Lenard & Straehle, 2012). For labour migrants, a conspiracy of circumstances make inevitable the choice of behaving as a version of *Homo economicus*, internalising market norms and legitimating self-exploitation and/or acquiescence with exploitive migration regimes (Matyska, 2019).

EARNING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH INTEGRATION

Migrants are not always held in a permanent state of suspended access to rights, and whether they arrive for a temporary job or for some other purpose, as they stay they become 'integrated' into their host society. The International Organization for Migration defines integra-

tion as a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live, resulting in migrants' incorporation in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the receiving community, demarcating the overarching objective of integration as social inclusion and social cohesion (IOM, 2019, p. 104). Visa programmes, and sometimes even supporting policies, are designed with the idea of attracting migrants who are perceived as desirable by reason of their profession, personal resources or willingness to work. Social class does not predetermine whether a migrant will be admitted or eventually integrated, but does put them into categories with varying paths to integration and possible eventual citizenship. For this reason, if a migrant is needed for a job, and willing and able to do it, social integration is rarely a priority, while even second-generation immigrants who are unsuccessful on the labour market are only reluctantly accepted. This priority is underlined by the fact that most migrant integration programmes today are shifting their focus to economic integration first, then social integration (Damm & Åslund, 2017).

Migrants gain access to citizenship rights as they spend time in the host country; in the economic realm of the market, and this occurs in terms of: (1) legal access to rights; (2) progress in finding work and possibly advancing in their careers; and (3) becoming more aware of local working conditions, and demanding equal treatment.

Integration can be understood as essentially concerned with migrants' social security, and could in principle minimise the risks associated with relocation from a country of citizenship to a foreign host country. However, legal migration regimes are constructed so that the longer a migrant lives in a country and the more permanent the status of their residence, the more social rights the migrant acquires, and the more decommodified they become. For instance, guestworkers in Switzerland in the 1960s had to maintain employment through the first five to ten years, after which their residential status became independent of their work contracts and afforded them social freedoms such as career choice (Hahamovitch, 2003). Thus, integration is also a process of decommodification, since through integration migrants gain access to the social rights available to host country natives, although this is directly contradicted by the fact that integration is conditional. Often, in part, the migrant gains access to social benefits by not needing social benefits. On the other hand, until – and in some respects even after – legal citizenship is acquired, this status is highly precarious, depending on the legal whims of the government, and possible loss of employment. For example, European Union citizens working in Brussels in precarious, though high-skilled, employment are regularly denied social benefits and deported when they lose their jobs (Simola, 2018). Even more dramatically, the United Kingdom (UK) Windrush scandal of 2018 demonstrates that even full citizenship is not safe, as minorities are always vulnerable to the advent of a racist political regime. In Windrush, for no evident reason, the UK deported long-integrated UK citizens coming from British imperial possessions between 1948 and 1970.

In terms of integrating through work, the length and openness of a path to citizenship is highly contingent on the perceived value of the migrant's work. We address these in three categories: (1) high-skill migrants who come for work; (2) low-skill migrants who come for work; and (3) refugees and asylum seekers.

Workers whose skills are in demand are highly sought after by many countries; in some cases through favourable visa policies that try to attract such immigrants, and in other cases by making it relatively easy to obtain visas when there is a job offer; for example, the green card programme for attracting information technology (IT) professionals to Germany (Kogan, 2011). There may be some restrictions on access to social support, or there may actually be

advantages, such as the high-skilled worker tax break in the Netherlands (Hercog, 2008). The right to stay may or may not be tied to an employer, and in cases where it is, such as the case of skilled temporary subclass 457 visa IT workers in Australia, workers' rights can be significantly constrained (Velayutham, 2013). However, high-skilled migrant workers such as managers, administrators and expatriate executives usually have the right to normal social services, including for their families (Khoo et al., 2005, p. 18). For high-skilled labour migrants, 'integration' into the labour market is often automatic, as they immigrate based on a job offer. This is most common with sponsored workers immigrating on targeted visa programmes, such as the German green card programme, Australia's 457 visa programme, the US H-1B visa programme, and similar programmes in the UK, France, New Zealand and Ireland (Khoo et al., 2007, p. 484). However, they too may have difficulties with other aspects of integration, especially host country language learning, because of time constraints due to their job (Chaloff & Lemaitre 2009, p. 39).

On the other hand, workers with low-valued skills may be in temporary mobility visa programmes with a time-limited right to stay, and restricted rights as is common for seasonal workers and contemporary guestworkers (Costa & Martin, 2018; Strauss & McGrath, 2017, p. 203). They may also arrive informally, with no right to stay. Many in this category are kept in suspension with no prospect for integration, as discussed in the previous section. Others find themselves working in the informal or semi-informal economy in the early phase of the migration, which combined with an irregular residence status, compounds their dependence on the employer and increases their willingness to accept substandard working conditions (Danaj et al., 2018). However, cases such as this sometimes change as migrants settle and gain rights.

Although refugees and asylum applicants have a wide variety of skill levels and professional backgrounds, they face a common challenge of skill qualification and the high incidence of low formal education levels (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019; Yu et al., 2007), resulting in lower labour market integration rates. In some European countries, comprehensive assistance programmes target refugees and asylum seekers, fuelling political debate about when they should have access to these programmes and the host country labour markets (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). In other places, they are kept in suspension and out of the labour market for long periods by bureaucratic administrative immigration procedures, visa and residential policies. For instance, many countries withhold integration services for asylum seekers prior to confirmation of refugee status, effectively transforming the issue of service provision into a question of citizenship rights (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019, p. 271; Yu et al., 2007, p. 27). Confirmed refugees, on the other hand, spend significant periods taking language classes and undergoing formal education. Some employers are slow to hire refugees because of widespread ethnic, gender and religious stereotypes (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019, p. 81; Rydgren, 2006). Additionally, random and mismatched spatial distribution of refugees across regions in host countries, as practiced in Switzerland, Canada and Sweden, further slows down labour market integration, as evidenced by refugees' poor integration outcomes in the initial immigration phase (Yu et al., 2007, p. 27). Arguably, for refugees and asylum seekers the problem is sometimes that they are not commodified, rather than that they are overcommodified.

The literature suggests that as migrants stay longer in a labour market they will lose their sending country points of reference, abandon their migrant mentality and become more embedded in the host society. They also become more likely to absorb union perspectives (Gorodzeisky & Richards, 2013). They move from ignorance and indifference towards appreciation of unions' role during their integration process, with the shift often coinciding with

their transferral from the underground economy to formal employment, usually in unionised sectors and workplaces (Gorodzeisky & Richards, 2013). In other words, their membership is determined not only by their own inclinations, individually or collectively, but also by the presence of appropriate structures to facilitate their organisation in the segment of the labour market where they operate.

Moreover, economic migrants' acceptance is limited to the section of the labour market where they relate to other categories of less than fully valued citizens, such as the failed citizen, the illegal immigrant, the benefit scrounger, claimant and criminal, from which the 'hard-working migrant' is differentiated by his economic value (Anderson, 2013). Often, migrant workers are admitted into a host country because of embodied characteristics that predispose them to adapt or adhere to the values of the host society; for example, in the popular imagination, the 'Polish plumber' is synonymous with cheap and hard-working migrant workers. By presenting the economic value of hard-working migrants, the discourse at once elevates this figure, but also sets up a conflict. The migrant is then presented as a 'good worker' in contrast to lazy locals, who are demanding and ungrateful. For example, MacKenzie and Forde (2009) show how, in one factory in Barnsley, UK, employers used such narratives to describe and justify recruitment of certain migrant ethnicities.

It is important also to keep in mind that integration prospects are limited further by racism and ethnic segregation, so that in many cases full integration results only in additional rights rather than in achieving equal citizenship (Wills et al., 2009, p. 258). Racial and ethnically distinct groups who integrate continue to be members of minority groups, susceptible to possible discrimination and exclusion. Host country-born members of immigrant ethnic groups are subject to various levels of discrimination, as has been shown by field experiments in recruitment in Finland (Ahmad, 2020) and Germany (Kaas & Manger, 2012), among other places. Integration is a way to 'earn' host country citizenship rights, but what that citizenship means is still contingent on racial and ethnic hierarchies.

INDUSTRIAL CITIZENSHIP: BOUNDED EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES

Bonacich (1972) observes that when new ethnic groups enter into a labour market, they are susceptible to exploitation by capitalists seeking to undermine existing wage levels and working norms, who turn them into pawns in the local class struggle. Forced by circumstance to work harder for less, separated from family and other distractions by distance, and often only interested in short-term earnings, migrants are well situated to outcompete locals (Piore, 1979). In this way, the migrant is at once considered an asset providing cheap labour for employers; a characteristic that enables their weaponisation by elites as a goad to discipline the native working class (Anderson, 2013). More blatantly, history is replete with cases of migrants being used as strike-breakers (Hahamovitch, 2003), as tension between migrants and natives is deliberately stoked and exploited by capital as a way of undermining trade unions (Bonacich, 1972). However, such limited integration and exploitative use of migrant labour undermines their ability to gain membership into the host country working class. On the other hand, industrial organising and incorporation can help to bridge the gap between migrants' pure market citizenship and more substantive citizenship forms.

Industrial citizenship refers to economic and social rights gained through political/industrial struggle. It allows for decommodification and inclusion of subordinate groups such as migrants, women and youth. Industrial citizenship relies on social processes regulating entry into the labour market contradicting the economic narratives of market citizenship which requires migrants to 'earn' their 'right to have rights' via economic success. Rather, industrial citizenship is 'earned' equally through work and participation in working-class struggles, which control and undermine markets through collective action. Further, it is embedded in the worker–employer (power) relationship, relies on structural political power consolidated through class-based collectivism, and uses this power to advance workers' interests (Zhang & Lillie, 2015). The archetypical industrial citizen within Western democracies is a white, male industrial worker, who is protected by laws and is represented by trade unions. He is in a permanent full-time job with wages sufficient for a single earner to raise a family in reasonable comfort. In reality, however, labour markets tend to be more diverse, with discriminated groups playing various subordinate roles. Additionally, over time, feminisation (Turner & D'Art, 2003) and multiculturalism (Virdee, 2000) have broadened this definition. Nonetheless, while not universal, the archetype applied in certain contexts to certain labour market segments, and to the extent that it was a reality, there is now a sense that it is no longer the norm. New sources of precarity have emerged, including part-time and temporary work, short-term contracts and platform work, and the groups that disproportionately fill jobs on these terms include women, young people, ethnic minorities and migrants (Doellgast et al., 2018). The increase in worker precarity correlates to a decline in industrial citizenship.

Industrial citizenship is thus emancipatory, but this emancipation does not necessarily extend beyond individuals who can join the 'insider' group represented by working class organisations. Unions can be inclusive or exclusive (Marino et al., 2017), and migrants or other excluded groups in some cases successfully organise their own emancipatory workers' struggles, separate from mainstream unions (see, e.g., Benvegnù et al., 2018).

The way in which national citizenships define who is 'in' and who is 'out' of a particular polity (Brubaker, 1992) does not necessarily match with the logic of class struggle, which defines a collective working class 'us' opposed to a ruling class 'them'. By necessity, industrial citizenship excludes the 'class enemy' – managers and owners of firms – and depending on its ideological formulation, it sometimes includes and sometimes excludes subaltern social groups, such as migrants and ethnic minorities.

For this reason constructing multicultural and inclusive unions is challenging, as it goes to the heart of national class identity, but it can be and has been done (Alberti et al., 2013; Virdee, 2000). Marino et al. (2015) argue that including migrants in the trade union movement depends on union legitimacy as migrant representatives, and on support for active participation of migrant workers on the shop floor and in the union structures. The many examples of grassroots self-organisation by precarious workers, in contexts that are theoretically covered by mainstream unions (Benvegnù et al., 2018; Mattoni & Vogliatzoglou, 2014), suggest dissatisfaction with or insufficiency of trade union representation. There is a perception of a distinctive worker identity with specific interests separating them from core workers, raising the prospect of a fractured class structure.

MIGRANTS CAUGHT BETWEEN NATIONAL AND ECONOMIC CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is embedded in nationally focused historical struggles, in terms of modern nation-building around class compromises. Migrants do not gain access into this imagined community of the nation simply by finding a good job. Belonging in the workplace is not only about the employer valuing the migrant as a cheap worker, but rather about joining a worker collectivity, including certain norms of treatment. Citizenship understood as a measure of social and political belonging, and a milestone of integration, raises the question of whether including the economic aspect cheapens the concept and its practice. Buying citizenship is an extreme example, which many find offensive. Nonetheless, some degree of *de facto* citizenship rights for migrants derive from migrants' position in the global labour market.

If we disambiguate economic status from integration, we arrive at Figure 9.1. The bottom horizontal axis indicates the measure of the migrants' economic status, or market citizenship, while the vertical axis indicates embeddedness or the level of local social and political integration, and de-commodification. The diagram is specific to a context. At the top right corner is the local elite, who are both full local citizens, and wealthy. The bottom right corner consists of top-level mobile professionals, entrepreneurs and expatriate business managers of transnational corporations (TNCs): that is, those who, in Ong's terms, make calculated investments in their capacities, and strategically manage their transnational lives. On the far left bottom corner are recently arrived low-skilled workers without papers, who have mobility and strategic calculation in common with the international professionals, but who lack power and resources. On the upper left are the indigent, long-term unemployed, workers in low-paid jobs, and those dependent on social assistance. In reality, most people are between the extremes presented here, with many migrants arriving with some skills and legal papers, or a plausible asylum claim, but without many options or resources to fall back on. As these average migrants begin to settle in the host country, advance in their careers and acquire more social rights, they might move both upward and to the right simultaneously. However, it is also possible to integrate socially, becoming a member of an immigrant underclass without ever being employed; or to advance economically in international work circles without integrating into the host country.

For analytical purposes, we set aside for the moment the argument that social and economic integration can be tightly connected, in order to illustrate that they are not necessarily always interlinked. If citizenship is the right to have rights, then market citizenship is a misnomer, because citizenship implies inherent rights rather than rights contingent on power to enforce them. On the other hand, market citizenship provides rights compensating for a lack of local citizenship ties, and facilitates mobility because the market citizen is not tied to one particular state. There is also a danger in assessing citizenship, and therefore integration, according to economic success criteria, as it entirely ignores those on the left side of the diagram. In generous welfare states such as the Nordic countries, Borjas's (1999) welfare magnet theory has raised policy concerns, which have resulted in a variety of measures, including punitive labour activation programmes, targeted at encouraging migrant employment.

However, only full economic integration holds the potential to deliver citizenship's egalitarian promise of equal opportunity so that migrants' labour market outcomes – employment rate, wages, protection, upward mobility – are equal to those of native workers (Rydgren, 2006). Yet, migrant economic integration programmes in developed Western countries, such as those in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), focus narrowly

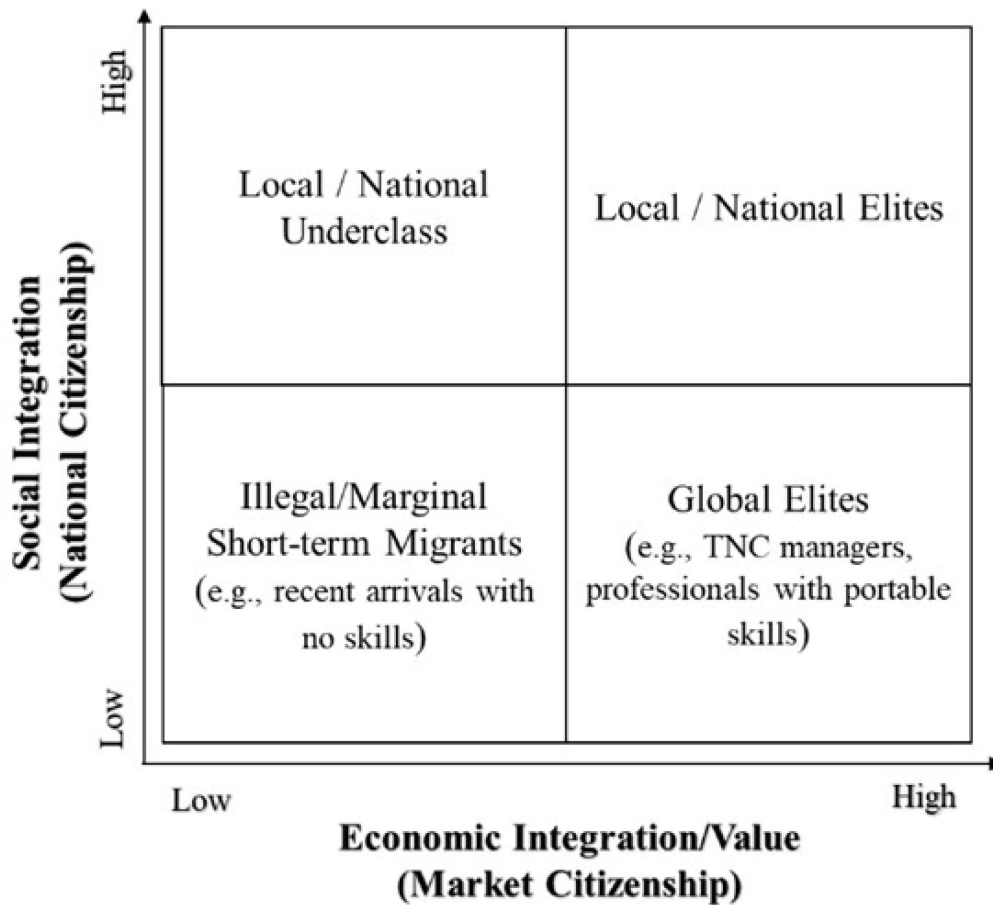


Figure 9.1 Integration and economic status

on improving employment rates, motivated by the evident significant gap between the labour market performance of migrants versus natives (see Damm & Åslund, 2017; Rydgren, 2006). Whether the metric of success for employment policy is helping the migrant to advance in their career, or to lock them into low-wage employment to reduce the unemployment figures as quickly as possible, has important implications. 'Jobs first', at the cost of quashing the ambitions of talented migrants, raises the danger of ethnic labour market segmentation (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). Active labour market programmes serve the function of disciplining the unemployed, turning them into market citizens, with undesirable social side effects (Greer, 2016). This returns us to Anderson's (2013) notion of the 'failed citizen', which is an outcome of privileging market citizenship as a dimension of citizenship.

CONCLUSION

Economic citizenship, and in particular market citizenship, are problematic concepts because citizenship as an idea derives its utility precisely from the fact that it is not directly reducible to economics. It could be argued that belonging, and the rights and obligations deriving from community membership, cannot be bought and sold. Obviously, this is not true: in many

communities, belonging can be bought. So, more plausibly, we argue instead that citizenship *should* not be bought and sold, and that marketising the integration process undermines decommodification and leads to inhumane outcomes. The wealthy and highly skilled move about the world and enjoy certain rights, while the poor are much more constrained. Citizens of rich countries usually have easy access to mobility, while borders present as moments where citizens of poor countries have their mobility confirmed or denied. The inequalities embedded in the variability in access to the ‘right to have rights’ configure in complex ways, reflecting tensions between territorial nation-states and global capitalism.

There is clearly an economic aspect to citizenship rights, as becomes clear when examining the migrant experience of integration into new host societies. While in some sense rights exist as abstract ideas, they mean little until they are implemented through the actions of national actors and institutions. The implication is that rights and citizenship exist as an outcome of historical national struggles to expand their meaning to new groups. In Western capitalist democracies, this means that most rights exist because of the class struggles that established modern welfare states. Market citizenship reduces humans to atomistic bare units of labour, eroding the society’s social core. The manner in which the market incorporates migrant labour in the global labour market undermines and threatens national institutions of industrial citizenship, including work status, remuneration and bargaining. In addition, industrial citizenship’s countermovement is hindered by the nationally insular underlying logic from which its power emerges. As new groups enter the labour market, its points of reference as to who is ‘in’ and ‘out’ must change if bargaining leverage is to be preserved, and this is a difficult and contested process, often lagging behind labour market realities. Migrant integration generally, labour market integration policy, and policies which promote temporary labour migration but inhibit social and political integration, must be understood in terms of their relation to national class hierarchies, and the national class conflicts and compromises that relate to them.

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II

STAYING BECAUSE OF ALL ODDS : LIVED EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN STUDENT MIGRANTS IN FINLAND

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Staying Because of all Odds: Lived experiences of African student migrants in Finland

Ndomo Quivine

International migration: Changing mobilities and changing spaces

The political, social, and economic salience of migrants to contemporary societies cannot be overstated in this epoch of demographic crisis and knowledge economy. Over the past five decades, human mobility across national borders has transformed significantly, influenced mainly by globalisation and its practices, climate change, and war and conflict. As a result, contemporary migrant geographies differ starkly from those of five decades ago. These changes to human mobility processes take place within societies that are also transforming politically and economically e.g., regional de-bordering as of the EU, rising nationalist and populist ideology, and the terrorism and securitization turn; and socially e.g., labour market precarisation and diminishing social security (Laine 2018; Yuval-Davis 2011).

In turn, the convergence of persistent dynamic human flows across national borders and global transformation processes produces an uneasy union rife with political and socio-economic dilemmas; which perhaps were most concretely portrayed in the socio-politically constructed post-2014 “migration crisis” in Europe (Laine 2018; 231; Anderson 2013). These dilemmas influence individual nation state’s interpretation of migratory acts, and the consequential migration management approaches pursued setting the stage for perversely regulated, mediated, and contested migration experiences. Moreover, contemporary state borders are no longer at the periphery of society; instead, they have been moved into the daily experiences within nation state territories (Somers 2008; Balibar 2004). Thus, the new flows of migrants into Europe, and a changing globalised Europe produces migratory processes characterised by stringent regulation within nation state territories, a feature I call pervasive internal bordering.

‘New’ borders for ‘new’ migration

The contemporary border can be conceived as a processual phenomenon that constitutes administrative procedures for excluding non-citizens in order to regulate their presence and access within a community of value (Balibar 2004). This chapter adopts a multi-disciplinary, and constructivist understanding of borders based on scholarship on processes, institutions, and structures that regulate migrants’ activities within host countries (See e.g., Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Yuval-Davis 2011; Lyon 2005; Balibar 2004). Therefore, a border is any regulatory institution and its corresponding practices, which function through differentiation to produce a hierarchy with clear distinction between citizens and non-citizens in society.

Such borders are also ‘expansionist’ widening their reach into trans-border phenomena, particularly by mandating the social state, and private social structures such as healthcare facilities, banks, schools, housing offices and employers to function as administrative personnel of the internal border (Zureik and Salter 2013; Yuval-Davis 2011). Together,

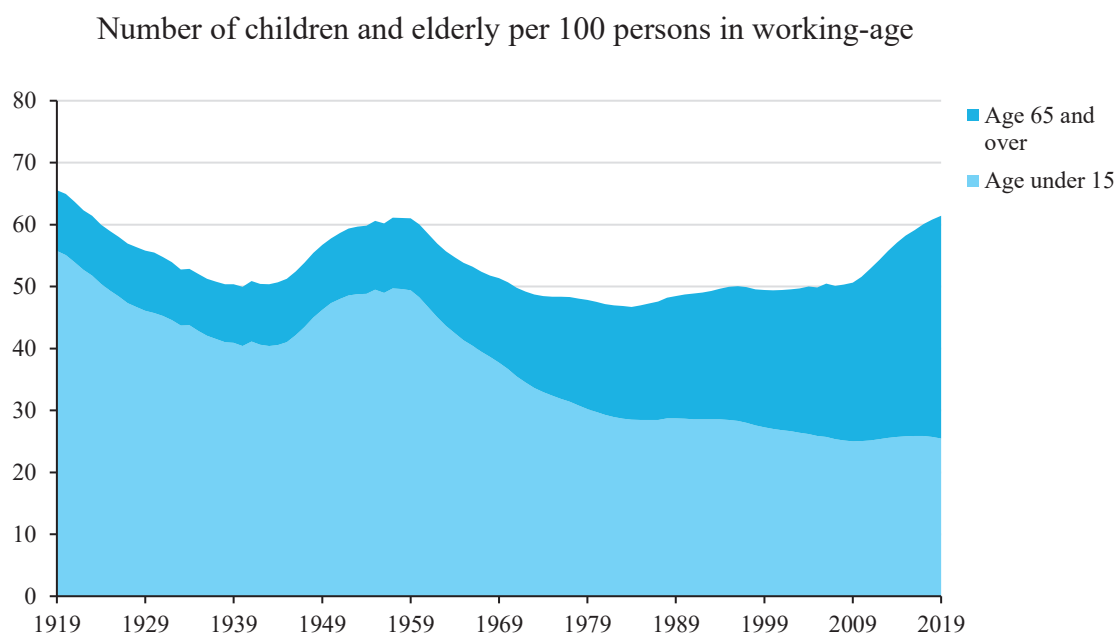
personalised bordering and administrative bordering are used to highlight the extent to which bordering permeates migrants’ lives. Administrative bordering includes all the bureaucratic gatekeeping activities implemented by institutions like hospitals, banks and schools, while personalised bordering refers and implies activities of differentiation that migrants learn to exert on themselves due to ‘chronic’ exclusion (Könonen 2018). Therefore, bordering is a technology of flexibility, determining who is in and who is out of specific aspects of society.

Contemporary Africa-Europe migration: The case of Finland

The universal Nordic welfare states provide rich country context for investigating the impact of emerging trends in migration control and regulation in the Global West. With fresh fears of welfare burden, crime and other distasteful cultural norms sparked by the migration crisis, the universal Nordic welfare states come to mind due to their generous residence based welfare arrangements. Moreover, the welfare magnet rhetoric (Tervonen et al. 2018) has prompted potentially tighter formal migration control in these countries albeit with varying degrees nationally. However, in light of binding international laws and their practices such as de-bordering in the EU, these states are also turning to pervasive internal bordering techniques to manage migrants within their borders. Such techniques include activities of gatekeeping, differentiation and sorting, regulation, surveillance, and precarisation (Zureik and Salter 2013; Lyon 2005).

Net migration to Finland was only realised in the nineties. However, today, international migrants are crucial for the Finnish economy and society. For Finland, the demographic crisis is a pressing reality with various sectors of the economy experiencing labour shortages and the dependency ratio rapidly weakening (Ministry of the Interior 2018).

Figure 1: Finland’s Demographic dependency ratio in 1919–2019



Source of Data: Statistics Finland

As a result, Finland adopted migration as a strategy for addressing its socio-economic challenges with strategies e.g., *The Future of Migration 2020 Strategy* and legislation e.g., *Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration 1386/2010*, to attract and retain international skills – students and labour. However, Finnish employers maintain a limited geographical purview of desirable migrants thus minimising the labour market integration potential of the excluded migrant groups e.g., African and Middle Eastern migrants (EMN1 2018: 6-7). Student migrants are the second biggest migrant group in Finland. In 2016, 76 per cent of student migrants originated from outside the EU/EEA, out of which 80 per cent were from Asia, while African students contributed about 20 per cent together with the Americas and Oceania (CIMO 2016). The number of applications by African students to Finland reduced significantly in 2017, due largely in part to change in legislation introducing school fees for non EU/EEA students, rising in 2018 and dipping slightly again in 2019 (Migri 2020).

However, on return migration rates, a survey on post-graduation mobility in Finland report a stay rate of eighty-five point four per cent for African graduates, eighteen percentage points above the general stay rate for all foreign graduates in Finland (Shumilova et al. 2015). An earlier empirical study of return migration in Denmark outline relatable findings indicating that migrants from the least (relative) developed countries realise the lowest return rates (Jensen and Pedersen 2007). Therefore, with a tendency to settle, African student migrants make up a significant portion of the Finnish international migrant stock, and constitute an especially interesting integration study group in post 2014-migrant crisis Europe, especially due to their ‘*unwanted brand*’. Disappointingly, previous studies e.g., Maury (2017), and participant narratives collected in this study portray a group of African student migrants staying in Finland who are forced to contend with disabling pervasive internal bordering in the legal-administrative, social, and economic spheres on a daily basis in Finland.

The purpose of this narrative chapter is to explore the daily lived experiences of a group of African migrants staying in Finland in order to understand the practices of migrant’ bordering within nation state territories in the context of post-2014 migration crisis Europe. Further, the study investigates the adverse socio-economic consequences of such practices on both migrants and host societies, and thus offers an alternative perspective to migrant decision-making behaviour especially decisions of settlement in a host country. The chapter aims to contribute to the discussion on rethinking EU-Africa relations from a migration standpoint. The rest of the chapter proceed as follows. The next section addresses the methodology of the study followed by an extensive analysis section. A section summarising the findings of the study follows and finally a concluding paragraph calls for ideological reconstruction of migration practices.

Mode of inquiry

The chapter is based on an analysis of data collected through twenty-three in-depth, one-on-one narrative interviews with African student migrants from Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia who are staying in Finland. Staying here refers to the choice to continue living in Finland after studies. Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya are the biggest senders of African student migrants to Finland, while Gambia and Zambia were chosen on a convenience snowball-sampling basis. Data collection and analysis followed the procedures of the narrative approach to qualitative research (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Interviews were conducted over a period of three months between January and April 2018; and January 2020 in Helsinki – the capital, and Jyväskylä – a university town, in English with a theoretically sampled group (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Interview questions sought a holistic biographical narrative including stories from the period before migration decision, the migration decision, travel, and the process of settling in Finland.

Data analysis focused on the elements of participant stories: interaction, continuity and situation through a data driven thematic analysis (Riessman 2008). I followed a four-step procedure adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018) and Corbin and Strauss (2008: 159-274) stepwise procedures to qualitative data analysis. My analysis and interpretation uphold the constructivist ideal that the world can only be known through representation, hence the focus on told narratives and the meanings attached to them. Thus, in data analysis, I interacted with the data in an attempt to make sense of the material, guided by my understanding of migration processes which is informed by existing literature as well as own experiences as an African migrant living in Finland (Denzin and Lincoln 2011).

Unpacking the practices of exclusion in Finnish legal, social, and economic spaces

In this section of the chapter, I present a narrative of systematic, extensive and, institutionally executed exclusion of a group of African migrants from various spaces of the society in which they live, study and work. The starting point and the core of the narrative is the status and ‘good’ of belonging, which emerged as a central theme in the migrant stories during data analysis. Yuval Davis (2011) describes belonging as a natural, organic, and emotive attachment to a place and a feeling ‘at home’ thus becomes a part of people’s everyday lives. These arguments are supported by the migrant stories collected in this study, where belonging is centrally situated in informants’ daily experiences. Belonging derives from full inclusion, through membership into a targeted collective with a boundary, thus enabling the included to access legal, social, and economic opportunities and resources necessary for forging a life perceived as worth living (See e.g. Yuval-Davis 2011; Somers 2008; Marshall 1992). Finally, informed by informants’ elaboration, I define belonging as the struggle for the status of valid existence in the communities and society in which one lives and contributes through duties and obligations.

Anthias (2008) explains that belonging is fundamental to migrants’ socio-economic integration in host societies. Finland is notably a homogenous country and as interview data indicates, the status of belonging is a significant socio-economic ‘*good/asset*’ for successful integration into the Finnish society. However, the same data shows that a variety of structures obstruct

migrants' access to this 'good' by sorting migrants out of the Finnish society and its privileges. Nonetheless, informants retain the quest of belonging as a key milestone towards their objective of attaining valid presence in Finland. Therefore, the informants' quest for belonging marks the beginning of an evolutionary process of coming face-to-face with exclusion, manoeuvring exclusion, and rationalizing the decision to stay in Finland in terms of migration experiences. Data analysis highlights a positive correlation between time and human resource investment on migratory processes and settlement; in fact, most migration laws reinforce this (Anderson 2013: 103). Participant accounts demonstrate that gaining substantive acceptance into the Finnish society legally, socially, and economically is extremely challenging especially for individuals perceived as culturally distant.

I don't feel I belong, no. So many things are different here; the culture, the people... and there are issues that nobody wants to speak of here like racism, which still exists. Immigrants can only get certain kinds of improper jobs regardless of their qualifications, which shows that the system is problematic. (Participant 7)

The rest of the discussion of migrants' quest for belonging continues in three sub-sections through themed discussions of the informant group's told experiences with the legal, social, and economic spaces of the Finnish society. Each thematic discussion begins by identifying instances of internal bordering, followed by an illustration of migrants' reaction to such bordering activities. Then section 4 presents a summary of findings, followed by concluding remarks ending the chapter.

The Finnish residence regime and the legal other

This thematic discussion illustrates migrants' dilemma in securing formal presence in Finland through the residence permit and the national identity card (Finnish ID) – instruments that aid bordering through sorting, regulation, and precarisation. All twenty-three participants of the study are legal residents in Finland, and all entered Finland as international student migrants on a fixed term 'B' resident permit for studies. At the time of the interviews, participants held varied residential statuses ranging from naturalised citizens to the fixed term 'B' residents; underscoring the generalising nature of bordering activities, not limited to irregular immigrants only. In this chapter, I argue that the Finnish residence permit is a legal structural bordering instrument used to manage the presence of migrants and migrants' access to various rights and opportunities in Finland while outlining implicit duties and responsibilities for migrants. The residence permit card provides a concrete tool for sorting, classifying and ultimately, 'othering' migrants via national legislation. For instance, third country student migrants receive a one-year temporary residence permit that is renewable yearly, which sets them apart from student migrants from the EU.

First, all residence cards in Finland do not function as official identity cards, thus, to access several basic services in Finland, informants obtained a national identity card, a document that is very seldom held by Finns. The Finnish ID for a migrant is also temporary, and the authority making the decision arbitrarily decides validity. De facto, the ID is a tool for identification via

differentiation and thus acts as a sorting tool. It extends the national boundary into the nation, into spaces such as an online banking site, university portal, or a nightclub where the ID regulates a migrant's access to services. Moreover, the real reason for insufficiency of the residence permit as an identification document is fuzzy, certainly unknown to migrants, but can be theorised to be regulative. Second, the Finnish residence permit is renewed at a fee of 190 euros in a process that also demands that migrants prove the capacity to cover their living costs in Finland with an income statement of no less than 6,700 euros per year (Migri 2020). These two legal status demands play a significant role in determining the social and economic activities that informants embark on upon arrival in the host country, an instrumental element of bordering in the labour market.

Third, various Finnish institutions use the residence permit to classify and categorise migrants in a hierarchy that determines inclusion or exclusion from rights and responsibilities accordingly. For instance, a 'B' permit, completely excludes the holder from all the services of the Social Insurance Institution in Finland (Kela), which are exclusively available for holders of a continuous 'A' permit. The minimum requirement for a continuous 'A' permit is full-time employment. What this means is that many international students who work part time in Finland do not have access to public healthcare, a basic social necessity for workers, especially those in risky secondary sector work like construction. Meanwhile, various institutions effortlessly sort migrants into classes through their legal statuses, a process that engenders the act of othering, which in turn reinforces the practice of personalised bordering by migrants themselves. Moreover, migrants' legal belonging, defined by a residence card category serves to reinforce other versions of bordering in the social and economic spaces in Finland.

Participant stories highlight a variety of reactions to the exclusionary tendencies of the Finnish residence regime. However, the most notable of these are joining the labour market immediately after arriving in Finland and rushing into convenience marriage.

I took up three jobs during the summer: newspaper delivery, cleaning, and home nursing. I did newspaper delivery from 12:20 a.m. – 6 a.m., slept for two hours, did cleaning from 10 a.m. – 3p.m. and home nursing from 4 – 9 p.m., slept for another two hours every day to make the 6,000 euros to renew my permit. (Participant 17)

The initial response to the limitations of the residence permit - though automatic - is acquisition of the Finnish ID, however, this is done out of necessity and does not register as an act of resistance, adaptation or manoeuvring. Secondly, in anticipation of the financial burden of renewing the first residence permit, participants took up wage work. Despite the many reasons that make migrants join the host country labour market, the need to ensure that one can secure their legal status at the end of their first year in Finland drove nineteen out of the twenty-three participants to join the labour market in their first year in Finland. Two participants sought social relationships with Finnish nationals including romantic relationships with the goal of cohabitation and a shared address; as well as acquiring the necessary human capital for obtaining, and seeking either a permanent residence permit or Finnish citizenship. These responses to the limiting nature of the Finnish residence regime have profound implications for the development of informant's migration trajectories. More important is the link between

migrants' experiences with the legal (political) space of the host country and migrants' socio-economic performance especially since this informant group unanimously sought migration to Finland to improve the opportunities available for them to forge a better life. This is explored further in the following subsections.

Courting the Finnish community of value

Belonging as membership follows full acceptance into a desired social and political collectivity such as a community. As a naturalised, emotive act of attachment and identification, belonging is multi-layered as individuals can belong to another individual, to a community, a nation, a job, a union etc. (Yuval-Davis 2011). Very often, social, cultural, economic and political belonging are addressed explicitly in discourses of belonging and citizenship (see e.g., Yuval-Davis 2011; Somers 2008). In this section, social belonging refers to inclusive membership in, and recognition of migrants by, the state, and consequently by varied collectivities in society, which in turn enables members to overcome embodied markers of legal status, race, gender, and class, which otherwise serve the default role of othering, and enabling exclusion. The link between citizenship and belonging is evident (See e.g., Anderson 2013; Yuval-Davis 2011; Somers 2008). Belonging follows acceptance, which ensures admission via full membership into a collectivity, which endows recognition based on equality between humans. However, historically, such recognition is tied to belonging in a nation state by blood, thus effectively excluding migrants from belonging in their host countries. Nonetheless, the crucial role of such membership for economic and political engagement and the social wellbeing that such activities engender remains. For migrants, social inclusion is a crucial starting point in the quest for belonging, yet, informants' stories indicate that gaining meaningful acceptance into the Finnish society, thus validation, is nearly impossible for most.

Participant stories describe the Finnish society – the social collectivity of relations, recognition and acceptance – as homogenous, closed off and exclusive of certain migrant groups. Widely acknowledged stereotypes about culture and tradition, language deficiency, and cultural or ethnic based differences regulate migrants' access to Finnish social circles. When employed in decision-making, these perceptions result in unfavourable sorting, and systematic institutional regulatory practices of exclusion follow. Failure to integrate into, or gain Finnish social networks materialises in varying degrees of severity, from difficulties in securing basic rights such as a place to live, getting a desired job to admission into a desired course programme at the university. Four participants explained the difficult process they endured while looking for rental apartments in Helsinki where applicants were sorted by embodied traits through a face-to-face interview before admission or rejection.

We waited outside on a long que for the interview. After we were seen, for reasons we can only assume related to our looks, it was not possible to see the apartment at that time. We walked out and soon after, the agent went to show the apartment to another person, this time a white person. (Participant 7)

International student migrants also face exclusion from opportunities such as a desired master's programme course. Participant five in this study explains that courses with the potential to improve his standing in the Finnish labour market were not accessible to him and other migrants like him. He was kept out through on account of language deficiency, which also ensures that migrant students do not even realise that they are excluded from their rightful privileges as international students, legally accepted to study in the university. Language is a rationalised tool for bordering and excluding migrants from varied social locations and positions in the Finnish society, while decision making administrative personnel take on a border-guarding role. Moreover, in Finland, statistical discrimination and taste-based discrimination are nearly normative. According to Ahmad (2019), however, this largely stereotypical prejudiced behaviour has been used to keep migrants out of desirable jobs while masking institutional and structural discriminative prejudices. Further, in taste-based discrimination, the populace become the border guards since it is their taste preferences determining the limits of migrants' inclusion and access. Participant stories also highlight instances of social bordering in public sites such as public transportation, recreational parks, and the work place.

I never had the urge to go for Finnish citizenship, but at some point, I just decided to go for the Finnish passport to avoid the many instance I had to explain to my Finnish children why we had to make separate ques at airports. (Participant 12)

In order to demonstrate sufficiently the impact of the pervasive social bordering patterns on the decisions made by the informant group, I introduce the concepts of precariousness, adaptation, compromise, identity management, and learning. Precariousness captures the crucial impact of endless social exclusion while the other concepts elaborate the various ways that participants responded to social exclusion. This discussion delves into participants' experiences of vulnerability because of failing to fit into the host society as full, valid members, as well as their dilemmas with maintaining and adjusting their career goals, self-perception, identity, and absolute or relative confidence vis-à-vis citizens.

Participants' reaction to social bordering was significantly elaborate and prognostic of their migration trajectory in the host country. Several migrant stories indicate feelings of invalidity and inconsequentiality arising from multiple failed attempts to integrate meaningfully in Finland through relations and networking with nationals, through work and colleagues, and through social and cultural engagements. Their acquired precarious social standing cemented their perception of exclusion and instrumentally led to acts of '*self-bordering*'. Those who experienced the most instances of exclusion from social spaces in Finland accepted the rhetoric of '*cultural distance*' and personalised their own bordering, beginning to blame their cultural and ethnic traits for their exclusion from the host society. The reaction that followed was retreating from the host society and straight into ethnic migrant communities and networks where social activities mimicked the norms of origin country. The multi-layered ethnic community networks identified – continental, national, and intimate group-based networks – organised around the value of solidarity and a collective approach to addressing immigration challenges. Networks equipped members with a unique *African migrant in Finland culture*'.

Moreover, since the networks tended to spring up around seasoned migrants, they enculturated the norm of settling, rather than return and/or on-migration.

However apart from self-bordering, the chapter identifies four different ways that participants expanded their Finland-embedded social capital, or leveraged such capital to advance their social belonging in Finland. First is marriage or cohabiting with a Finn. At the time of the interviews, six participants who had Finnish spouses/partners explained that the Finnish side of the family was instrumental in their quest for belonging in Finland as it improved their social standing (location) in society, especially improving their visibility. Second is having a Finnish child (*not necessarily with a natural-born Finn*). Ten participants had children in Finland whose wellbeing they were committed to realising through the opportunities of advanced education provisions and security among other opportunities available under the universal social welfare regime. For them, parenting a Finnish child or a child born in Finland helped to validate their presence in Finland through socially embedding interactions. For instance, school-going children expanded a parent's network to include teachers and fellow parents who sometimes grew into acquaintances or friends; parenting also involved unavoidable and valid engagements with varied national institutions such as schools, churches, and health centres, which in all embedded the parents to a defining extent to the host society. It also scaled down the conscious burden to prove one's validity through the single route of full membership in society.

The third technique is building a Finnish network. Participant narratives underscore the importance of Finnish networks in '*surviving*' in Finland, from getting a house, to getting a job. Differentiation of citizens from non-citizens, especially the culturally distant groups like African migrants is central in regulation of access in the Finnish society. The in-group does not trust the excluded group and this manifest in exclusion from several substantive and instrumental social opportunities and activities. Therefore, migrants use Finnish networks to make up for their cultural deficit. Indeed, participant twelve acknowledges that she had an easier experience compared to her mates as she had a Finnish family network from the beginning. The fourth technique is embedding the self in Finland by self-identifying as a Finn.

Collectivities (and membership in them) develop around shared culture, beliefs, profession, values, religion etc. thus generating a link between belonging and identity. Further, holistic belonging in a nation state is based on identity. Therefore, it is not unusual when migrants revert to identity politics to improve their social standing in a host society. As argued by Yuval-Davis (2011), and in this study, identity stories included narratives that refer to migrants' pasts, which help to problematize the current situation and projects a desired future trajectory. Participant 8 explains how he adopts a fluid identity to optimize his experiences in Finland.

I become whatever the other person wanted me to be. I exist in context. So, when a drunk person in a bar asks me why I came to Finland; I say I came to drink! (Participant 8)

The four techniques described above, as well as the initial reaction of retreating to an ethnic enclave are migrants' constructions of belonging, which serve a performative role (Butler 1990, cited in Yuval-Davis 2011). Such performance could be resistance, as in retreating to an ethnic

enclave; resilience as in identity reformulation and projecting perceived Finnish identities; or manoeuvring as in marriage and cohabitation with a native Finn.

Alternative belonging: Economic citizenship and valid workers

This final thematic discussion illustrates internal bordering as experienced by the informant group in the Finnish labour market. Administrative bordering is particularly rampant in the Finnish labour market, which is a dual segmented market with clear division of primary and secondary sectors as well as division of labour between market stakeholders. Accompanying the sectoral distinction is a criterion for worker distribution based on differential embodied characteristics such as nationality, race, ethnicity or gender (Piore, 1979). Thus, migrants face ad-hoc sorting, differentiating, regulating, and discriminating acts from employers, contracting agencies, and those controlling job vacancies and recruitment processes in the Finnish labour market (Ahmad 2019).

The first, and an overarching border imposed by a bifurcated labour market is an institutionalised obstruction of mobility between the sectors (Piore 1979). All the twenty-three informants are active participants in the Finnish labour market with nineteen working in the secondary labour market. The nineteen participants express dissatisfaction with their manual, unskilled work, which they describe as demeaning, deskilling and dehumanising and thus share their ambitions for primary sector work even when they acknowledge the unlikelihood of such reality.

I am not working in my area of expertise now, simply because I am a foreigner, and in a country like this, not all institutions are so accepting of people like me especially in white-collar jobs except some few fields like IT. And even there, you have to prove yourself first, and how do you do that when you won't get a first chance? (Participant 3)

... Without a Finnish surname it's not easy to get a job in most fields in Finland, even when you speak Finnish, speaking Finnish is not everything. (Participant 10)

Second is discrimination. Valtonen (2001) explains that the Finnish labour market operates under two discriminatory premises: statistical discrimination and taste-based discrimination, which regulate and streamline migrants' access to the labour market. Recent studies concur, and identify further discrimination based on cultural and ethnic traits, which becomes a key challenge for culturally distant groups such as my participant group in the Finnish labour market (OECD 2017). Despite obtaining tertiary education in Finland, nineteen participants were unable to find jobs in their areas of expertise. Moreover, past work experience was unrecognised thus worthless in employment seeking. Participant five explains that even internationally recognised and lucrative certifications such as Project Management Professional (PMP) and Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) were unrecognised and thus useless in Finland. The failure to recognise foreign academic qualifications and accumulated professional experience keeps migrants in the lowest status jobs in Finland.

In Finland, ‘we’ only do these ‘shoddy shoddy jobs’. Before I came here, I was a teacher you know. I have travelled and I am well educated but now I clean and I wash dishes ... (Participant 8)

Third are the cumulative barriers in the legal and the social spaces such as the temporary residence regime, language deficiency, underdeveloped or inaccessible Finnish networks, and negative stereotypes which aggravate migrants’ bordering in the labour market by cementing their status of precariousness. After completing his master’s degree, participant seven, holding the fixed term ‘B’ permit could not access municipal employment services that should have improved his chances of getting meaningful work in Finland. At the same time, all participants have missed a job, or a promotional opportunity due to language deficiency. Moreover, a foregrounded discourse of trust in worker recruitment practices in Finland excluded participants from consideration in a number of work opportunities for which they qualified simply because they lacked the trustworthiness that comes with an endorsement from a Finn. Therefore, the residence permit, trust, and language were tools used by employers and recruiters to bar participants from accessing the Finnish labour market on an equal footing with nationals, thus human agency could not measure up to the systematic and embedded nature of these bordering tools.

Participants’ reaction to bordering in the labour market take the form of acceptance, diversion and compromise. Fundamental is participants’ inability to employ manoeuvre tactics in this space, thus contributing significantly to their emerging migrant trajectory of extended stay in Finland. In terms of acceptance, participants accept their fate in the Finnish labour market, coming to an understanding that their kind mostly does manual and unskilled work and that is just how it is; in fact, some understand Finland’s decision to exclude them, although this is limited only to exclusion in the labour market.

As a human being, I might not be okay with my fate as a job seeker here but I also understand that there are laws that prioritises the Finn and the European over me. (Participant 8)

Diversion and compromise work together to provide participants with alternative validation. Participants identify and reify other aspects of their experience with work such as wages and salaries that are higher relative to home country in addition to working conditions such as coffee rooms, which compensate for the unpleasant nature of the work itself. A key technique of diversion is alternative membership based on labour market participation. Labour market membership ‘*economic citizenship*’ (based on work validates participant’ stay in Finland with work as migrants core purpose in Finland. Membership through tax duties, which extends participants validity beyond the labour market into society through tax utility value when used for national socio-economic development.

Lastly, class membership obtained through wages, income and lifestyle validates migrants as equal beings to nationals of similar social classes. However, the most significant reaction to bordering in this sector is the decision to stay in Finland as workers, albeit in unskilled, deskilled, and dehumanising jobs. In fact, this chapter argues that the bordering role of these jobs is crucial in altering migrants’ trajectories towards a settling tendency by enforcing temporariness and precariousness, which slow down all migration processes and decisions.

Summary of findings: Outcomes of pervasive internal bordering

In the analysis, I have shown the extent of bordering as it materialises in migrants' daily life experiences as encountered by a group of African migrants in Finland. The encountered borders were both administrative and personalised. The analysis also highlights the various techniques and behaviour patterns adopted by migrants in reaction to such bordering individually, and in ethnic networks. In general, migrants resolve to either adapt or manoeuvre the exclusionary activities through a personalised protracted struggle between the processes of defining the migration trajectory and overcoming the processes of exclusion in daily encounters. Thus, analysis underscores the link between the pervasive internal bordering of migrants and the prevailing migration trajectory, which in this case is a unanimous change from a trajectory of temporary stay to that of settling in the host country. Migrant stories indicate that pervasive bordering reinforced an extended stay in Finland by delaying migrants' acquisition of a status of belonging and validity through perverse exclusion from social and economic spaces in Finland. Moreover, experiences of pervasive bordering reinforced the desire to belong, which takes on additional value as an avenue for inclusion as well as a status reward for the social, and economic resources invested during stay in the host country. Analysis of interviews with migrants shows that participants adopt a migration 'culture' - strategies, knowledge and coping mechanisms – for an African migrant living in Finland.

The findings of the chapter can be summarised into three phases through which internal bordering shapes participants' migration trajectory. First, bordering through the residence regime triggers participants to pursue a permanent residence permit and citizenship status early in their immigration. Second, the attempt to advance legal status initiates a quest for social belonging, sought through marrying a national, having a Finnish child, joining an ethnic enclave, and reconstructing identity. Third, failures related to the participants' attempts to gain meaningful inclusion into the Finnish society produces precarious individuals whose experiences in the Finnish labour market are marred with discrimination and exclusion to the margins of society. The socio-economic failure experienced by these informants amount to a loss not only to the migrants, but also to the origin countries in terms of brain drain and to Finland, which fails to optimise its human resource pool.

Concluding remarks

The pervasive internal bordering of African student migrants in Finland incentivise their longer and even permanent stays in their new host country. Thus, increased internal bordering reinforces a settling tendency in migration. However, as I have illustrated, the nature of migration enforced by such bordering is arduous, unsystematic and time-costly. It often results in loss for both migrants and host societies in socio economic terms. In short, internal bordering reinforces inefficient and ineffective migration processes.

Increased internal bordering is not unique to Finland. Migrants categorised as culturally distant to a host population (SIRIUS 2018) commonly experience migrant exclusion through language

barrier, statistical discrimination, mismatch between migrant labour demand and supply. Nonetheless, these challenges are critical and should be addressed as they undermine the wellbeing of migrants as well as socio-economic life in host societies. Since 2009, the Finnish government has incrementally put in place migration programmes e.g., Talent Boost, aimed at increasing and improving economic migration activities in the country with a focus on competitiveness, attraction and retention. However, though positive, programmes like Talent Boost have a narrow focus in terms of migrant groups in the country and as well as their strategic focus which is purely economic inclusion.

Based on the outcomes of this study, I draw the following recommendation for a socially inclusive integration regime. One, the focus of integration should emphasise migrant's wellbeing as much as host country's economic gains and a first step towards this could be better matching between international course programmes at the university and the labour market needs of the host country. Two, integration programmes should be targeted, acknowledging the different needs of migrant groups in the country in order to better reduce discretionary space for exclusion. Thirdly, integration programmes should be designed with an understanding that overlooks stereotypical claims and definitions that further the exclusion of African migrants in host society communities.

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III

RESISTANCE IS USELESS! (AND SO ARE RESILIENCE AND REWORKING) : MIGRANTS IN THE FINNISH LABOUR MARKET

by

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Chapter 7

Resistance Is Useless! (And So Are Resilience and Reworking): Migrants in the Finnish Labour Market



Quivine Ndomo and Nathan Lillie

7.1 Introduction

Integration theory regards host countries as novel environments into which migrants immerse themselves and adapt to a new culture and labour market. In Finland, integration is discussed in terms of labour market success (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). Finding work tends to occur in the ‘secondary’ labour market as migrants have difficulty accessing the more secure jobs of the ‘primary’ labour market. In other words, they face a segmented labour market. Segmented labour markets are split into non-competing segments sustained by institutional barriers (Leontaridi, 1998). Doeringer and Piore (1971) argue that labour markets tend to dualise into two separate and virtually independent primary and secondary sectors, in which different labour market structures prevail. This segmentation ‘allows’ the labour market to treat its participants with an uneven hand, according different opportunities to otherwise comparable people and thus entrenching exclusive labour market practices that impact marginal groups first (Ryan, 1981). The Finnish labour market, as far as Finnish natives are concerned, is characterised by a relatively low level of dualisation and precarity, largely due to wage compression and a high level of collective agreement coverage. This equality and security, however, does not apply to the same extent to specific sectors, firms, and positions where migrants tend to find work (Danaj et al., 2018).

Occupational discrimination is common in Finland (Liebkind et al., 2016), despite overall wage compression in lower status positions due to their being unionised and well regulated. Empirical evidence shows that occupational integration of migrants in Finland is hierarchised by nationality, resulting in the

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161

disproportionate concentration of migrants in the less desirable secondary sector of the labour market, especially in less skilled jobs (Ahmad, 2015; Heikkilä, 2005). This is true even of highly skilled immigrants to Finland, who often end up working in unskilled or low skilled jobs despite their qualifications (Heikkilä, 2005; Jaakkola, 2000). This segmentation is based on ethnicity and national origin, which structures who is perceived as an appropriate candidate for a skilled job (Chang, 2014). Dual labour market theorists further predict that social reproduction within class systems enforces relative immobility between the two sectors (Doeringer & Piore, 1971, 180). Integration for migrants and refugees in Finland is for many a dual challenge – initially of entering the labour market at all and then crossing over from one occupation to an occupation more appropriate for that individual’s capabilities and aspirations.

Roughly 458,000 foreign language speakers¹ lived in Finland at the end of 2021, about 8 per cent of Finland’s population (OSF, 2022). The migrant and refugee population in Finland consists of third-country nationals from all around the globe. The largest migrant groups come from Russia, Ukraine, and India. Other countries in the top 20 include Iraq, Vietnam, Somalia, Syria, and Nigeria. Asylum seekers differ slightly, with Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, and Russia as the top five origin countries up to 2021 (Finnish Immigration Services, 2022). In 2022, most asylum seekers and temporary protection applicants are Ukrainian citizens. Including Ukrainian migrations in 2022, the largest age group for both arriving migrants and refugees is 18–34 years, followed by 35–64 (ibid.). These are prime labour market activity years, cementing the prominence of work and labour market training as an integration pathway for both groups in Finland. Recent migrations from Ukraine has the potential to alter the gender dynamics of the migrant population in Finland, which might in turn affect the migrant division of labour, and is therefore a phenomenon to watch in future research.

In Finland there is a strong government-supported integration policy. Overall, integration services are well-funded and perceived as being of high quality (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). Civil society organisations also offer integration services (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2021). The assumption behind integration is to change the migrant’s profile and skills to better fit Finnish society and the local labour market; in general, when the migrant’s career ambitions and perceived needs of Finnish society conflict, it is the migrant who must compromise. The structure of segmentation pushes migrants toward the secondary labour market, while integration policies encourage reskilling into low- or mid-skilled occupations that hire migrants; for many migrants this thwarts their ambitions. Consequently, migrant agency, as an innate ability to survive (resilience), reconfigure (reworking), or seek redress (resistance) in oppressive situations is crucial to migrant integration, playing different roles with consequences in different integration contexts (Berntsen, 2016; Katz, 2004). This adaptation has a personal price for the migrant however: survival at

¹In Finland, this is a good proxy for foreign-born.

the cost of limiting personal ambitions. This chapter looks at how labour market structures force migrants to refocus and limit career goals.

Drawing on Katz's (2004) disaggregated conceptualisation of agency as resilience, reworking, and resistance, this chapter explores how agency manifests in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees to illuminate the counterintuitive role that migrant agency can play in reinforcing exclusive integration practices in the Finnish labour market. We do not mean to imply that migrant agency is necessarily a negative force in migrant integration; it is of course essential to adapting to a new context. We do, however, want to point out that in some cases, structural factors ensure migrants are caught in a rigged game that they cannot win. In such cases, emphasis on agency shifts attention away from fixing the structural factors that prevent migrants from succeeding.

We use the concept of disaggregated agency to highlight the nuanced responses of a biographically diverse group of migrants to integration challenges. We analyse biographical narratives of 11 migrants, four of whom are refugees, living in Finland, who are employed or actively seeking employment. Our interviewees engage most in resilience and reworking, with very rare instances of individual indirect acts of resistance consistent with prior studies (Berntsen, 2016; Katz, 2004). We also find that the availability or non-availability of integration support affects the forms of migrant agency used, with implications for integration programme planning. Finally, linking agency and unequal labour market power relations, the chapter shows how migrants' overreliance on resilience and reworking – and rarity of resistance – favours the continuation of discriminative labour market practices such as statistical discrimination, labour exploitation, and labour market segmentation.

7.2 Theoretical Background: Unpacking Labour Market Integration in Finland and Migrant Agency

Meta-analysis of literature on migrant labour market integration in Finland identifies key integration barriers as structural and cultural discrimination; local language incompetence; and poor coordination of integration policies (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019, 251; Petry & Sommaribas, 2018; Martin & Prokkola, 2017; OECD, 2017). Migrant job seekers in Finland face a market segmented by skill requirements and discrimination (Ahmad, 2015, 2020; Valtonen, 2001). In attempting to integrate and find work, the emphasis of policy and of migrant individual agency is on resolving the first issue – skill requirements – while neglecting the second – discrimination. Our analysis of the biographies suggests that the two are intertwined; 'skills and qualifications' present an incontestably legitimate and necessary way to sort job applicants. However, sometimes the amorphous and subjective nature of skill acquisition and recognition, as well as roles for which certain people are deemed suitable and others not, ensure that skill recognition in practice is not free of discrimination (Esses et al., 2014).

High skill requirements for jobs in Finland's primary sector (Heikkilä, 2005) – coupled with a Finnish Nordic labour market model that excludes the possibility of low-wage/low-productivity work through the generous social safety net, high union density, and centralised collective wage bargaining – sustain high and stable wage levels (Ho & Shirono, 2015, 17–25). The primary labour market consists of well-regulated jobs with a career perspective. Special internal labour market rules follow the human resource requirements of the dominant firms in the primary job market instead of open market mechanisms. Access to these primary market jobs is regulated by gatekeepers with a high level of discretion about whom to hire, which among other things, makes hiring discrimination possible (Doeringer & Piore, 1971). Finnish labour market institutions tend to level out wage differences between the primary and secondary sectors and ensure that the secondary sector is relatively smaller than in other countries; nonetheless, migrants tend to be pushed toward secondary sector jobs. The role of discrimination in sorting workers by ethnicity in the Finnish job market is well documented. Two recent studies based on fictitious responses to real job applications using Finnish and non-Finnish names to determine whether an interview would be offered to applicants with identical qualifications found that employers preferred candidates with Finnish surnames, while ethnic candidates were further ranked according to perceived cultural closeness (Ahmad, 2020; Koskela, 2019).

Active labour market policies play a strong supportive role in migrants' labour market integration, but also restricts and channels migrants in sorting their available options. In Finland, the state delivers labour market integration services through local and municipal employment offices (TE-offices). Official integration services are provided free of charge to migrants registered as unemployed job seekers within 3 years of arrival in Finland. The official integration programme is a package of services that includes an initial assessment, individual integration plan, Finnish and Swedish language courses, and labour market skills training. Integration training runs for up to 3 or 5 years (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). Asylum seekers and migrants with a temporary residential status such as students and seasonal workers do not have access to official integration services even when most eventually join the labour market (Ndomo, 2020; Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019; Maury, 2017). Nonetheless, despite the top-down policy assumption that migrants are subjects to '*be integrated*', our analysis suggests that the central actor is the migrant, who strategises around labour market opportunities presented by the labour market and by state integration services.

Generally, agency is the capability to exert some degree of control over the conditions and circumstances of one's life, exploit available opportunities, and open new possibilities (Barnes, 2000; Sewell, 1992). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) have argued that a nuanced take on agency focusing on its discrete components allows for a better understanding of agency-structure interplay, coining the term disaggregated agency. In their seminal work Emirbayer and Mische (1998) focus on the temporal embeddedness of agency, disaggregating three temporal orientations: the iterative, projective, and practical-evaluative (*ibid.*, 971). However, in this chapter we apply Cindi Katz's framework of 'disaggregated agency', which is

based on a three-step typology of material social responses to perceived oppressive and unequal power relations (Katz, 2004). In Katz, the three broad forms of social action – resilience, reworking, and resistance – are treated as different manifestations of human agency. Katz’s theory of disaggregated agency links concrete social practices to varying degrees of consciousness of prevailing life conditions. Thus, every agentic response derives from the actor’s level of awareness of their life conditions and the power relations that shape their life. These range from limited consciousness for resilience, on one hand, and oppositional counterhegemonic consciousness for resistance, on the other, while reworking falls in the middle (ibid., 250).

This framework underscores the possibility for differential responses by individuals exposed to similar structural contexts of hegemonic power relations e.g. migrants in a host country labour market. Katz’s theory also spotlights the diverse outcomes of agentic social action, which include survival (resilience), reconfiguration (reworking), and subversion (resistance) (2004, 242). Katz defines resilience as a determination to survive within oppressive conditions, enforced through a myriad of tactics on a daily basis. Datta et al. (2007) identify resilience tactics among migrants, such as working two jobs in low wage occupations in the UK. Reworking practices are strategies for reconfiguring the self and rerouting resources to favour one’s position and make living conditions more comfortable, albeit within the confines of oppressive power relations. Lastly, resistance describes strongly oppositional practices whose goal is to re-imagine and reconstruct unequal and oppressive power relations (Katz, 2004).

We assert that while agency is analytically useful, there is a danger in the normative tendency of migration research to celebrate ‘granting’ agency to migrant workers. Agency does not, in itself, contest or remove unequal power relations and can, as our analysis shows, just as well serve to reinforce them. Classical migration theories focus on rationality in decision-making as an exercise of agency (Massey, 1999). Neoclassical labour migration theories expand this view by including the collective role of the family in the decision-making process (Abrego, 2014), while critical migration theories develop the idea of ‘constrained agency’ mediated by social networks and structure (Hellman, 2008). The idea that agency also allows resilience, and resistance in the face of unequal, oppressive, and contingent labour market relations further helps us understand migrants’ coping strategies and survival tactics – understood though as acts of ‘*resistance*’ (see; Datta et al., 2007; Rydzik & Anitha, 2020). Finally, there is the idea of collective resistance that offers the possibility to change economic and social relations and redefine migrants’ structural position in the labour market through collective action (Paret & Gleeson, 2016). Agency is in itself value-neutral; Katz’s resilience, reworking, and resistance are as likely to buttress, mediate, or mitigate systems of unequal power relations as to challenge them (Berntsen, 2016). We regard migrant agency as both an enabler and a barrier to the labour market integration processes of biographically-diverse migrant groups to the growing field of research on migrant agency and migrant integration.

7.3 Methodology

7.3.1 *Data and Methods*

The chapter is based on 11 biographical narrative accounts of four refugees and seven other migrants who arrived in Finland between 2010 and 2015 and were still living in Finland at the time of the interview. All participants are actively involved with the Finnish labour market as employed workers, unemployed job seekers, or vocational trainees with intermittent short-term employment. The interviews were conducted between January and May 2020 and as a result, our data does not reflect COVID related impacts on migrant labour. The study was part of a larger multidimensional empirical research project on the integration of migrants, refugees, and asylum applicants in European labour markets implemented between January 2018 and July 2021. The project includes six separate but interrelated qualitative research studies, involving key migration stakeholders in Finland. All six studies have focused on the labour market integration of migrants, refugees, and asylum applicants in Finland. Each study approaches the topic from a different standpoint, namely: labour market structure, legal, policy, civil society, social partners, and migrants' perspective. The analysis and findings of this chapter are grounded in this larger body of data and multi-sectoral analysis of migrant labour market integration in Finland.

Seven of the interviewees were men and four were women. Interview respondents were of Ghanaian, Nigerian, Russian, Somali, Syrian, and Indian nationalities, satisfactorily covering the main third-country national migrant groups living in Finland. The youngest had migrated to Finland at the age of 17 and the oldest at 50. All participants had at least secondary education, and seven held university-level degrees. Respondents were recruited in Helsinki, the Finnish capital, and Jyväskylä, a small city in central Finland, through selective sampling and snowball techniques. Participant recruitment, interviews, and data storage and management followed the ethical guidelines of the University of Jyväskylä, and the ethical board of the SIRIUS project. QDA Miner qualitative data analysis software was used to organise, code, and thematically categorise data. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of participants.

The biographical research approach (BRA) as a form of social enquiry foregrounds social action and the role of human agency in social life, thus allowing a reading into the dynamic interplay of individuals and history, and the inner and outer worlds (Merrill & West, 2009, 17). In this research, BRA allowed combining 'agency' and 'biography' as key theoretical and analytical constructs in the study of human lives. The main interest of the interviews were the critical events (*turning points*) in the migrant's life course that influenced current decisions made (*epiphanies*) regarding work and labour market integration in general (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). We thematically analysed critical life-changing events tied to labour market entry and work life using the three dimensions of agency. This research is grounded in a theoretical frame that uses a combination of the

Table 7.1 Profiles of interviewees

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Country of origin	Year of migration
Ahmad	36	Male	Syria	2015
Elvis	40	Male	Ghana	2013
Fred	35	Male	India	2013
Gordon	30	Male	Nigeria	2014
Ismail	22	Male	Somali	2015
Jeff	37	Male	Ghana	2014
Judith	56	Female	Russia	2014
Kadar	28	Male	Somali	2015
Marina	35	Female	Russia	2010
Melina	45	Female	Russia	2015
Rahaf	28	Female	Syria	2015

biographical interpretive concepts of life-changing events (turning points), embedded life lessons (epiphanies), and disaggregated agency as interpretive lenses.

In the dialogical process of research, a researcher is positioned by their biography, and that position can enable or inhibit the research through power dynamics (England, 1994, 248). Our research design carefully considered both positionality and power relations especially in data collection and reflexivity in analysis. Therefore, a team of five conducted the research: the authors and three research assistants of migrant backgrounds, recruited from a higher education integration programme (INTEGRA) at the University of Jyväskylä. This combination of ‘experienced knowledge’ and ‘expert knowledge’ was seen as useful especially for interpretation and for intersubjective interaction in data collection (Denzin, 1998, 325) (Table 7.1).

7.3.2 *Integration Actors in Focus*

Besides participants’ biographical narratives, this research is grounded in a large body of empirical data that includes other central actors shaping the integration process as resources that cut across the micro, meso, and macro dimensions of migrant integration. For the purposes of this chapter, we focus on a narrow set of actors including the individual migrants, immediate family, friends and ethnic community members, educational and training institutions, and state-level policies or integration support mechanisms. Availability, access, and utility of these resources differ across participants.

At the micro level, personal resilience applies to all 11 participants. However, participants rely on family, friends, and ethnic community members differentially based on whether that resource exists at all and whether that resource is present in Finland or absent. Where participants do not refer to family, friends, or ethnic communities as a resource, the category is excluded. At the meso level, we focus on education and training institutions due to their central role in integration of

migrants in Finland, including provision of labour market-targeted skills and a link between migrants and employers or the labour market at large. Participants experience this resource differently based largely on structural variations such as type of institution, access to institution, and specific institutional migrant integration practices. As at the interview time, four participants attended research universities and another four attend vocational training institutes. Vocational training institutes provide more industry-targeted skills as well as links to labour market as compared to research universities. Lastly, at the macro level, we focus on the state-sponsored integration programme and nationwide skill profiling through allocation of resources for these programmes. Table 7.2 summarises the contribution of policies, educational programmes, and personal relationships to each participant's integration experience.

7.3.3 *Structure of the Paper*

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. The next section presents a three-part data analysis, illuminating how migrant agency manifests in the labour market integration processes of 11 migrants (including four refugees). The analysis explores key life events and lessons that shape participants' insertion in the Finnish labour market within the first 10 years. Analysis is divided into three phases, each using one dimension of agency as the analytical lens. Phase 1 addresses seeking and finding the first job using resilience as the analytical lens. Phase 2 looks at attempts towards work and career mobility through the analytical lens of reworking. Phase 3 explores participants' future career plans through the analytical lens of resistance. The final section presents a summary of research findings and ends the chapter with concluding remarks.

7.4 Migrants in the Finnish Job Market

The time of initial entry into a host country labour market typically coincides with multiple inescapable changes in the lives of migrants. Changes in legal status, family composition, social networks, and other changes in the life course affect migrants' labour market integration experience and trajectory directly or indirectly. Further, migrants must also contend with the effects of the new labour market structures on their job search and career progression. In Finland, this includes contending with labour market segmentation practices that steer migrants toward secondary market jobs, while discouraging and obstructing primary market job ambitions (cf. Ahmad, 2015). For instance, eight of 11 participants initially entered the Finnish labour market through low status occupations as drivers, postal workers, and caterers. Considering participants' biographical diversity, we ask how participants cope with unequal and oppressive labour market practices and how such practices impact

Table 7.2 Typology of actors and factors

Research participants		Educational/ raining institutions (meso)	State policies/support (macro)
Ahmad	Personal resilience (+)/friends (+).	Targeted skill training (+) Link to job market (-)	Official integration Programme (+)
Elvis	Personal resilience (+)/friends (-)/wife & children (-)	Targeted skill training (-) Link to job market (-)	Official integration Programme (-). Lack of skills profiling mechanism (-)
Fred	Personal resilience(+)/friends (-)/wife & child (+)	Targeted skill training (-) Link to job market (-)	Official integration Programme (-). Lack of skills profiling mechanism (-)
Gordon	Personal resilience (+)/close ethnic community (-)/ friends (-)	Targeted skill training (-) Link to job market (+)	Official integration Programme (-). Lack of skills profiling mechanism (-)
Ismail	Personal resilience (+)/close ethnic community (-)/ friends (-)	Targeted skill training (+) Link to job market (+)	Official integration Programme (+)
Jeff	Personal resilience (+)/friends (-)/wife (-)	Targeted skill training (-) Link to job market (-)	Official integration Programme (-). Lack of skills profiling mechanism (-)
Judith	Personal resilience (+)/friends (+)/husband (-)		Official integration Programme (+). Skill profiling mechanism (+)
Kadar	Personal resilience (+)/close ethnic community (-)/ friends (+)	Targeted skill training (+) Link to job market (+)	Official integration Programme (+)
Marina	Personal resilience (+)/husband & children (-)		Official integration Programme (+). Skill profiling mechanism (+)
Melina	Personal resilience (+)/husband (-)	Targeted skill training (-) Link to job market (-)	Official integration Programme (+). Lack of skills profiling mechanism (-)
Rahaf	Personal resilience (+)/close ethnic community (+)/friends (+)/husband & children (+)		Official integration Programme (+). Lack of skills profiling mechanism (-)

their labour market insertion. Drawing on Katz (2004), we explore the variety of material social practices participants draw on to cope with entering and working in an unequal, segmented labour market whilst adjusting to other changes related to migration.

7.4.1 *Phase 1: Resilience – Finding and Keeping the First Job*

The first job is crucial to a migrant's labour market integration trajectory, especially in a segmented labour market. Early research has shown that finding a first job presents a bigger challenge for women and non-EU migrants in EU labour markets compared to maintaining a job (Ouali & Rea, 1999). Participants experienced seeking and executing the first job in Finland very differently, mainly because of biographical differences and also individual legal status and the consequential access or lack of access to official integration services. Our analysis does not show that the integration outcomes of those who participated in the official integration programme was better than those who did not. However, the official integration programs clearly patterned participants' degree of reliance on resilience tactics and reworking strategies as explored in this phase and Phase 2 of the data analysis. Age differences, civil status, level of education, legal status, prior work experience, and career advancement influenced participants' experience with the first job in Finland. Nonetheless, the first jobs of both participant groups relied on official integration services, while those integrating individually were disproportionately concentrated in archetypical migrant work in elementary occupations and the service industry. Specifically, eight of 11 participants secured their first job in Finland in elementary occupations including driving and delivering goods, distributing newspapers, and assisting in food preparation. Further, for a majority of eight participants, the first job engendered downward career and social mobility, exacerbated by labour market segmentation practices. An emergent pattern of response by the group of eight to the first job was to '*accept and rationalise*', while individual participants adopted more nuanced coping tactics such as instrumental rationalisation and dual-frame referencing.

Instrumental Rationalisation: Accepting 'the Bad First Job' For eight participants, the first job in Finland was degrading, challenging, and unsustainable. It also served as the first turning point event of participants' labour market integration journey, which began with job seeking. Based on their first job, participants immediately learnt a key lesson about migrant labour market integration in Finland: that there are specific jobs migrants can access and they must accept that. As a result, participants constructed the reality of '*the bad first job*' as the inevitable first step towards realising their migration objective. Participants employed diverse instrumental reasons to aid acceptance of 'the bad first job'. We classify them into two categories: one, practical (economic) reasons; and, two, strategic reasons tied to individual migration and integration agenda. On practical economic reasons, participants without access to welfare support (for instance, international students) explained that the first job was only a way to make ends meet. Others with access to welfare support accepted jobs for reasons such as compliance with the individual integration plan, which is enforced partly by the unemployment office and is therefore tied to welfare support administration.

I did a mini job – I don't know what to call it – distributing adverts and newspapers. That was my first job in Finland. . . I needed money. It's always money, right? I needed money for upkeep and survival, for food and stuff like that. So, I needed a job and that was the easiest job you could find at that time. *Gordon (migrant)*

Participants accepted the 'the bad first job' as a means to an end and a 'normal' step in the integration process. However, we argue that the inevitability of these jobs was partly socially constructed by participants who sometimes specifically sought these types of jobs or accepted them as a manoeuvre tactic in response to experienced labour market integration challenges. Acceptance of 'the bad first job' is seen as 'epiphanic' because the decision is preceded by concrete lived experiences through which participants understood the operations of the Finnish labour market, as well as their realistic integration potential within Finland. Accepting 'the bad first job' is a compromise resulting from weighting alternative realities, guided by the logic of instrumental rationalisation. Still, instrumental rationalisation processes vary among participants according to biographical characteristics such as legal status and age. Following the instrumental rationalisation logic, we argue that accepting the first job is a tactic that affords participants the resources of money, time, networks, and awareness/consciousness. When combined these resources can enable participants to cognitively validate and accept their present experiences in a bad job and also provide a springboard for some to move from the first job into a different, preferably better, job. The following excerpt tracks the initial agentic social response process of a single participant in the context of migrant labour market insertion.

Start: 'Coming to Finland, I knew that I had good capabilities, a good CV and my international certifications – PMP and CISA which was quite a force. I also read from *'this is Finland'* and other websites that many companies in Finland operate in English as well and many people in Finland spoke English. So, I was quite confident that I could continue practicing in Finland as I did in Ghana. So, I got my tools and came to Finland expecting to continue from where I stopped in Ghana'.

Turning point: 'I went around visiting companies looking for contracts and could not find a job. Because most of the companies mentioned the language limitation as the reason for not employing me, I decided to stop trying to find employment and instead find a professional development unit (PDU) to join to keep my certifications valid. So, I contacted my university, and they did not have any project to involve me in. I also contacted some IT companies LINKI and NAVA and explained that I was just looking for a chance to keep using my CISA'.

Epiphany: 'Then after walking around for a while without finding the work I wanted, also not getting a PDU, I decided to take any work available. Trying to take care of my family with small kids and trying to avoid depleting my savings, I decided to take on any job I could get here. I started distributing papers. Whilst doing this, I was also thinking about trying to develop as good a transcript and as good skill as possible so that by chance I finish my masters and the Finnish companies see my school performance and the skills I have developed, they could reconsider and give me something to do'. *Elvis (migrant)*

Dual Frame of Reference: Accepting 'the Bad First Job' As has been seen elsewhere (Waldinger & Lichter, 2003; Piore, 1979), some of our participants employed a dual frame of reference as a rationalisation technique. They compared wages, working conditions, precarity, and formal institutional labour relations and their implementation in Finland to those in their country of origin. Several

participants made general references to work in Finland and at the country of origin in their narratives; however, only two evaluated work in Finland as generally better than work at the country of origin with regard to ‘the bad first job’. Our findings show that age and past work experience influenced who applied the dual frame of reference and not the relative socio-economic status of the compared countries, underscoring the emphasis of the biographical approach on agency’s role in social action. Of all participants, eight are from Global South countries, yet only two notably young participants without established careers prior to migration employed the dual frame of reference tactically to accept ‘the bad first job’.

For instance, Kadar works in the Finnish restaurant sector, where his own experience, as well as prior research, document informal market practices and segmentation, especially in reference to migrant workers. Kadar’s dual frame rationalisation is notably general.

Working in [Somalia] Africa is different, there; your employer pays you what he wants. Sometimes you work for about 18 hours and are paid only 150 dollars a month. Working in Finland is different; it is good to work here. They pay good salaries. If everything is okay, working here is really good. *Kadar (refugee)*

7.4.2 Phase 2: Reworking for Career and Work Mobility

Consciousness of our daily condition and the underlying power relations develops over time and variably among people (Katz, 2004). Individuals facing similar problems can develop varying degrees of consciousness and engage in varying responses as well. Levels of consciousness, which can range from limited recognition of oppressive power relations to critical oppositional consciousness, determine individuals’ practical responses. Reworking as an agentic social act among our research participants is epiphanic since the awareness that a particular condition limits integration derives from experience, as does knowledge of suitable strategies to manoeuvre such barriers. The need to rework is learnt from experience. After searching, finding, and doing their first jobs, participants understood the Finnish labour market to a degree, especially the barriers and enablers to integration. Here, differences in understanding can be attributed partly to the involvement of the employment office in the integration processes of some participants.

‘The bad first job’ experience cultivated a critical consciousness among participants and motivated them to adjust their (power) position as workers in Finland. Reworking involves making one’s life liveable with reasonable comfort despite oppressive and unequal underlying power relations. As such, reworking strategies often involve reforming one’s own capacities to leverage prevailing conditions rather than changing the ‘system’. Participants’ growing and urgent need to escape difficult and unsustainable jobs and downward mobility marked a key turning point. In response, they designed and executed strategies to improve their status as prospective employees for various fields of expertise. Influenced by biographical

differences, participants employed reworking strategies in three focal areas: reskilling, skill repackaging, and skill showcasing. Our analysis finds that participants engaged in reworking to reclaim control of their migration and integration trajectories after a perceived threat during the initial labour market insertion. In their reworking strategies, a dichotomy emerges between the practices of the group receiving official integration assistance and the group receiving no assistance, with the former focusing more on reworking for horizontal mobility, while the latter sought upward cross-sector mobility.

Reskilling: Targeted Education and Education Skill training is a key reworking strategy for upward career mobility among our participants. This finding is consistent with migration policy discourses that highlight the significance of skills in labour market integration in Finland (Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019) and corroborates Heikkilä's (2005) account of the highly educated Finnish workforce. However, concrete differences emerge in the ways that participants with access to official integration services and those who are individually integrating engage in reskilling. Individually-integrating participants operate freely within and across fields of expertise to reinforce their skillsets, constrained only by legal status limitations and individual capabilities. On the other hand, the TE office guides the skill training choices of those participating in the official integration programme. For young refugees undergoing secondary and higher education in Finland such as Rahaf, language barriers limit career, vocational training, and tertiary education options further as Rahaf explains below.

The labour office must work out an integrated settlement plan for the immigrant from the moment they enter Finland to include language proficiency level, study area etc. As at now, they have a plan, but it is too simple. If a person wants to work in their profession, they have no place because they [TE office] decide the opportunities that a migrant can access. Even the Finnish language courses we attend cannot qualify the immigrant to enter the university or to complete their dream courses. *Rahaf (refugee)*

Participants engaged robust reworking strategies through skill training to manoeuvre the barriers between the primary and secondary Finnish labour markets. One such strategy is training specifically in high-demand skills. Using this method, a migrant first studies the labour market skill demands and the hiring patterns of specific industries, then trains in the identified skills. Such training is often supplementary to previous studies – or entirely different from initial field of expertise. According to two of our participants, training is pursued outside conventional academic institutions because of a perceived mismatch between academic institutions' curricula vis à vis labour market skill needs. Skill training organised by companies match industrial demands, and are better, shorter, and less bureaucratic.

Jeff is the poster child of this reworking strategy. Failure to secure a job in his area of expertise in Finland based on experience and training in Ghana and a master's degree in IT from Finland marked a turning point. An epiphany followed. Finnish academia is at odds with Finnish industry and academic institutions do not produce the skills employers demand, resulting in poor employment outcomes. Thus, to move from a newspaper delivery job to a data engineer job, Jeff designed his own

integration strategy, which spanned 2 years and was self-funded and thus implemented alongside menial jobs for material support. He modelled his skill training around Finnish IT companies' skill portfolios and hiring trends. When relevant courses were not available in Finland, he pursued international professional certification programmes online at his own cost. Today, after more than 5 years, Jeff finally made the transition to a primary labour market job as a data engineer for an IT company in Finland. However, the success and the 'ease' of Jeff's implementation of this reworking model is misleading as it glosses over issues central to its success, such as continuous learning opportunities specific to Finland.

...at the end of the day, it all depends on your personal preparation for the job. Preparing yourself for the technology that whichever company you are targeting uses at the time. So, the thing is that probably while still studying you have to start preparing yourself for the processes that the companies go through, the things that they produce, instead of depending on school because the sad thing is that you get your tuition from school, but they don't teach practical things that the companies' need. . . There is a huge gap between what is taught in the university and what the companies are actually practicing'. Jeff (migrant)

Paradoxically, while migrants such as Jeff who do not receive official integration assistance may manage significant leaps across sectors, refugees like Kadar, a young Somali, are limited by the official integration programme and can apply only moderate strategies for horizontal work mobility. The integration practices and systems of the TE office and secondary educational and vocational institutions in Finland restrain Kadar's integration pathways (cf. Bontenbal & Lillie, 2019). He follows an integration plan, which is based on an assessment of his academic abilities, language, and labour market skill needs. As part of the integration plan, Kadar completed a six-month internship as a food preparation assistant at a restaurant and has worked at the same restaurant for another year. At work, Kadar faces discrimination and worker exploitation, marking a turning point in his integration journey. However, Kadar's room for reskilling manoeuvre differs from Jeff's. Kadar must rework within the scope of his individual integration plan, developed at the beginning of his integration. Already placed in the restaurant sector by his integration plan, his goal is to transition from working in immigrant-owned restaurants with poor working conditions to Finnish-owned restaurants, which require professional qualification obtained in Finland as he explains below. Thus training to be a chef, Kadar's strategy is to be able to work in a restaurant of his own choosing, not limited by his formal qualifications and the associated politics of recognition.

I have worked in many foreigner-owned restaurants and in pizza delivery services. They still call me for more work, but I am tired of working long hours with little payments. I have worked for long hours, which Kela cannot know because it is hidden in opening and closing time. I have worked 12 or 13 hours to earn an insignificant amount of salary. You get very tired; you cannot do anything; you cannot manage to go to school the next morning. But in Finnish firm you are required to work for 8 hours. Now I am waiting to finish my school, then I find a good job with a good salary. Kadar (refugee)

Skill Repackaging: Certification/Authorisation As a reworking strategy, certification focuses on redirecting and rebranding the resources that an individual already has in line with the normative expectations of the host country labour market. It

includes following formal procedures to acquire recognised qualification in the host country in a specific field of practice. It also includes authorising foreign qualifications. Certification/authorisation provides a way to work around statistical discrimination in recruitment. In Finland, certification procedures that involve taking tests in the Finnish language present an obstacle for migrants seeking to have qualifications officialised in specific fields. Of all 11 participants, two directly engaged in the certification process, while a third considers undertaking the process. Judith completed the recognition process of her teaching qualifications obtained in Russia and should be able to use the qualifications for future job-seeking. Like Judith, Marina attempted to authorise her foreign professional qualification for use in Finland. Foreigners qualified as doctors outside the EU/EEA must authorise their foreign qualifications through a procedure outlined by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira). Conditions for licensing include a combination of internship, clinical practice, Finnish language proficiency, and a licensing exam in Finnish.

After completing and passing the Finnish language course of the TE office, Marina began work practice at a local hospital as the first step towards her licensing. Insufficient discipline-specific Finnish proficiency, coupled with family responsibilities, led to a catastrophic internship experience and inability to take the licensing exam. Unlike Judith, Marina did not succeed in becoming a licenced and practicing doctor in Finland.

It was too difficult to combine work, study, and home. The children were quite small, three- and seven-year-olds. I tried to concentrate on the exam so that after passing it I could have my diploma confirmed but didn't feel confident. *Marina (migrant)*

Although her first reworking attempt – to have her foreign certificates recognised – was unsuccessful, Marina pursued an additional reworking strategy successfully. Trained in a high-demand skill in Finland, Marina is one of three participants who did not undergo ‘the first bad job’ experience in the secondary sector. The failed internship experience became the turning point in her integration journey. Her experience taught her that she simply could not practice as a doctor in Finland. Therefore, considering the magnitude of the language and commitment demands of the medical licensing procedure, Marina pursued an alternative reworking path: re-skilling (epiphany). A career demotion to a practical nursing position allowed her to practice in her field of interest with significantly lower language demands and simultaneously manage her family responsibilities. The strategy of self-demotion allows Marina to redirect her resources as a healthcare professional, with manageable conditions both at work and at home.

I decided to work as a nurse, as I cannot imagine how one can work as a doctor not knowing the language on a good level, not even good, on an excellent level. A patient can lose his trust if his doctor's speech is a kind of illogical. Then I was too afraid when working in hospital to miss some important information and make a mistake. It happened a few times that I thought I understood something well, but I didn't, as a result I gave wrong information and all such cases made me nervous and non-confident, so I decided to try myself in the sphere of caring. *Marina (migrant)*

Skill Showcasing The bulk of the reworking strategies of participants seeking to change or modify fields of expertise (such as Marina) and those seeking to acquire professional qualifications for the first time (such as Kadar) consist of learning, training, or authorisation exams – or all. However, three participants seeking only the chance to continue practicing in their professional fields of expertise based on prior education and work experience used reworking strategies to showcase their skills and capabilities. Finnish employers, like employers around the globe, use internships and short fixed-term employment contracts to access, evaluate, and recruit skilled workers. However, migrants’ access to such opportunities in Finland is limited. The epiphany of the need to creatively show Finnish employers their skills and capabilities derived from the three participants’ futile experiences of seeking a first job in their fields of expertise.

To gain initial access to Finnish employers in their respective fields, Elvis, Fred, and Gordon sought to improve the visibility of their skills and capabilities as experts to Finnish employers. Central to their strategies was negotiation, where the migrant takes on an onerous, and sometimes financially costly, initiative to ensure that potential employers see their skills, unobstructed by structural or cultural barriers. In 2014, a leading IT consultancy in Finland declined to hire Elvis as an intern because of poor Finnish language skills. A few months later, the company offered him the same opportunity on different terms: do the same work, without pay, as a master’s thesis project in English. Seeing an opportunity to demonstrate his capabilities to a potential future employer, Elvis accepted the job.

Fred was frustrated with his precarious employment consisting of a series of two-month contracts and sought employment security when he signed up for a hackathon in his field of expertise. It presented an opportunity to show his skills to target employers or investors. Although he won the hackathon, Fred was unable to reach an employment or sale agreement with an interested company in a process that was complicated by legal status limitations and potentially exploitative unequal power relations of industry negotiations, patents, and copyrights. Lastly, Gordon, a Nigerian international student in Finland, developed a portfolio of freelance online work completed for clients based in Western countries such as the US, referencing that in job applications and at interviews to showcase his skills and abilities.

Before my current job, I had worked as freelance software developer online, with clients from the US. So that was the work experience which I used to get jobs, even though I had no real physical workplace experience. I did the freelance work on the side during the time I did the newspaper delivery work because... I wasn’t satisfied with where I was then, so I kept looking and searching for work. *Gordon (migrant)*

By accepting unpaid work for a target employer, developing a prototype in the presence of potential employers at a hackathon, and building a portfolio through freelance work online, participants directly and indirectly attempted to reconfigure their labour market conditions by showcasing their skills and capabilities to overcome statistical discrimination. However, there is also a strong potential for such strategies to result in exploitation by employers who find they can get job seekers to do useful work without having to pay them for it. This underscores the self-

reinforcing nature of precariousness and vulnerability among migrants in the labour market and the potential of migrant agency to reinforce unequal and exploitative labour relations in an environment where the employer has a strong power advantage.

Determining the success of reworking among our research participants is challenging especially because the common reworking strategy involves reskilling, which spans long and variable periods among individuals. Participants may also alter and revise reworking strategies mid-process, making it difficult to demarcate the beginning and end of reworking or tangibly evaluate such processes. However, below, we analyse Elvis's encounter with reworking further, as it illustrates plausible progression from reworking to resistance on the grounds of re-imagining and reconstructing one's migration trajectory through outmigration.

7.4.3 Phase 3: Resistance – Where Do Migrants Draw the Line?

Our interviewees' stories emphasise the need to endure and adapt, but for some comes a revelation that the sacrifices they make do not necessarily lead anywhere they want to go; a first bad job is one thing, but a lifetime of them another. Realisation of the structural factors inhibiting labour market success arrives slowly because of the normative seductiveness of the ideology of adaptation and resilience. One interviewee used the parable of the toad in boiling water to explain how the system itself undermines resistance since by the time the migrant realises the situation, it is too late, as all his or her energy has gone into adapting and being resilient.

Once upon a time lived a toad with a special yet tricky ability to adapt to life threatening change. When in danger, the toad could transform its outer skin into a hard shell for protection while buying time for escape. However, to use the special ability effectively, the toad needed full understanding of the situation and incisive decision-making. One hot afternoon, the toad leapt into a pond to cool off; except the pond was not a pond, but a pot half filled with water for someone's afternoon tea. The pot was put on fire and soon the toad noticed that the pond was heating up. Aware of its special ability, the toad decided to wait it out while assessing the situation, hoping that the pond would cool down again soon. However, the toad's special ability is only an emergency survival mechanism that is unsustainable for long periods. To turn its skin into a hard shell and sustain it that way, the toad uses up a lot of its energy, and if it sustains the mechanism for a long time, it eventually runs out of energy, becomes unable to jump out of the pond into safety, or sustain the hard-shell protection. After about seven minutes, the toad started feeling the heat from the water meaning that it could no longer sustain the hard shell. Paradoxically, the moment the toad realised that the only solution was to jump out of the pond, was also the time it did not have any energy left in it. In the end, the toad died inside the pot. But what killed the toad? *Elvis (migrant)*

The toad parable makes clear why resistance is the rarest of the three material social practices of agency (Katz, 2004, 251); our findings also reflect this. For the purpose

of this analysis, we define resistance narrowly as strategic acts of individual migrants aimed at reconstructing or re-imagining the migrant's world, potential, and possibilities. Our definition waters down the counterhegemonic and strong oppositional elements of conventional resistance as practiced in industrial relations to reflect the limitations within which participants operate, without entirely excluding their potential for resistance. To understand how certain acts by migrants and refugees qualify as resistance, we begin by demarcating the additional boundaries within which migrants operate in the labour market and how those configure their potential for acts of resistance.

Industrial relations overemphasise the role of unions and organised class-based resistance to migrants (Penninx & Roosblad, 2000). Union membership and the protection it offers through workplace regulation are important to migrants' ability to resist exploitive conditions, but collective organised resistance of migrants *as migrant workers* is completely absent from our data – and almost unknown in the Finnish context. Finnish unions, which are almost entirely staffed and run by Finns, dominate the space of organised workplace resistance, channelling it in a class- or profession-based way, as defined by their Finnish staff and members (Baglioni et al., 2020). In any case, most of our interviewees' grievances were about not getting the jobs they wanted in the first place. Unions recognise the problem that migrants are often under-employed, but structurally do not see themselves as positioned to address this issue (Baglioni et al., 2020). A cleaner's trade union, for example, can represent a migrant cleaner to receive his fair salary as a cleaner, but has no standing to fight for his fair chance to be hired as a computer programmer. In the Finnish context, unlike in many countries, the former problem is less acute for most migrants (admittedly this is because of the omnipresent union organisation), while the latter problem is experienced to a greater or lesser degree by every one of our interviewees.

Nine participants were either unemployed or in short-term precarious employment in sectors outside their areas of expertise, which also undermined the extent of their organisation through trade unions. Similar to Berntsen (2016), we find that individual migrants can, and do, engage in resistance, albeit rarely and in muted variations. Drawing on the evolution of Elvis's reworking trajectory and Rahaf's oppositional stance on acculturation, we illustrate how migrants mount individual opposition against hegemonic labour market recruitment and employer practices.

Outmigration or Staying: Acting on Own Terms? Focused on leveraging his professional capabilities, skills, and potential as an expert in information systems, Elvis constantly searched for employment that matched his qualifications with limited success. In 2014, Elvis had a major epiphanic turning point experience that would later shape his critical stance on migrant labour market integration in Finland and his decision to seek outward migration. Elvis recognised the internship opportunity mentioned earlier as an unequal and exploitive powerplay by the company, but thinking he could reroute circumstances in his favour, nonetheless accepted the offer and completed the assignment. Five years later, however, Elvis's employment trajectory still falls short of his expectations, triggering the following revelation: the Finnish labour market operates on an underlying structure of unequal exclusive

power relations between Finnish employers and institutions, on the one hand, and ethnic migrants, on the other. Thus, in others' footsteps, Elvis has decided to join a growing group of highly skilled migrants leaving Finland because of lack of professional opportunities. Prior research shows a growing trend of European brain drain through outmigration by highly educated persons (Panagiotakopoulos, 2020). Although migrating out of a host country may not directly change the existing unequal labour market power relations, it represents the strongest oppositional statement a migrant can make against the backdrop of a 'staying' tendency. Further, reference to acts of previous actors implies the element of 'a movement' and its accumulative potential to influence direct and large-scale change in the future.

I want to complete my PhD this year and move on. My first choice would be to have a post doc position outside Finland in an English-speaking country since, first, I think the language and, two, the perception about migrants, or I think – my ability to deliver or be in a skilled job e.g., at a manager level or a mid-management position won't happen here. So, I would rather look for places where I have seen black people in managerial positions in consultancies. Because then I know that I could have a levelled ground to be what I want to be. Another reason why I want to move away from Finland is that I have seen friends with families, with children here. Children born to migrants here do not get to live to be what they want to be. It's either you do nursing or some vocation, which you do not even get to practice. So, as a father, I would not want to limit the options available to my kids. *Elvis (migrant)*

Rahaf's case of resistance against acculturation is similarly subtle, showing only the potential to affect the object of resistance indirectly at a future time. At present, Rahaf is undergoing the official integration programme's language training prior to vocational training, while previously she worked briefly as an Arabic teacher. Although her labour market experience is scarce, she gleans from the integration experiences of her husband and peers in skill training and employment that her future labour market integration prospects are dubious. She understands that refugees in Finland tend to work in the secondary sector as cleaners and chefs and train in limited vocational skill areas, guided by integration officials into specific occupations. Further, public discourse, and past studies (Ahmad, 2015, 2020) have shown that ethnicity influences migrant recruitment and employability in Finland, where potential employers negatively evaluate significantly distant cultural groups such as Rahaf's. Although conscious of this reality, Rahaf strongly rejects the suggestion to change her name to a Finnish-sounding one to improve her employability.

Many people advised us to change our names or some of our culture because our names are strange and that makes employers to not accept us. But no, we will not change and it's not only us...Is it reasonable to change my name in order to get a job when in my country I had a job that was better than good?...We may live here all our lives and the fact that our children will be raised here, we want to teach them a little from our culture, and during their living here, they will certainly learn from the Finnish culture. *Rahaf (refugee)*

Our analysis classifies this practice of social reproduction as resistance because it indirectly challenges a system that encourages discriminative employer practices based on ethnicity. Her stance indirectly opposes discrimination in the Finnish labour market. Although individually implemented, it has the potential for collective

impact. Both the anticipated and declared acts of the two participants show that although limited by their contingent existence, narrow set of rights, and precarious labour market position, migrants can and do engage in acts of resistance – albeit indirect, accumulative, and only as variations of normatively-defined resistance. As the parable about the toad makes clear, the reason why epiphanies resulting in resistance occur rarely, and after long experience, is the myth of possibilities for advancement held out by the idea of labour market integration through adaptability and resilience.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter aimed at one goal; to problematise theorisation of the role of human agency in migration and migrant integration processes. To do this, the chapter focused on a specific case, unpacking how agency manifests in the labour market integration of 11 migrants (including four refugees) currently living in Finland and actively engaging the Finnish labour market as employed workers or unemployed job seekers. Theoretically, the chapter drew on a theory of agency as social action and used a dual framework combining agency and biography as drivers of integration as social action. The analysis used both thematic analysis and narrative analysis to look for alternative and counter narratives of agency and migrant integration. The analysis classified participants' integration into three phases – resilience, reworking, and resistance – based on both the dominant material social practice employed and the temporal phase of the integration process.

The key argument made, based on analysis, is that migrant agency can play a counterintuitive role in reinforcing exclusive integration practices in the Finnish labour market. Our analysis supports this argument by showing scenarios where overreliance on agency allows a shift of attention away from the structural factors that prevent migrants from succeeding in the labour market. For instance, we show that migrants draw most on restorative material social practices of resilience and not oppositional and disruptive acts of resistance. All participants engaged in acts of resilience such as accepting '*the bad first job*'; most reworked their circumstances through reskilling, for example, and at least two engaged in indirect, individual acts of resistance. This disaggregation of agentic social action allows us to show the link between agency and unequal power relations and make clear the implicit limitations of agency in challenging structurally-rooted barriers to labour integration. Reflecting on the nature of migrant agency, and on how agency allows migrants to adapt to the labour market of Finland, the chapter shows the dangers of reifying agency. Overemphasis obscures shortcomings of Finnish labour market practices and official integration services by assigning migrants responsibility for their own integration, which they only have limited ability to influence. Furthermore, in exercising their resilience and reworking strategies, migrants reinforce their own exclusion and precarity by indirectly reinforcing discriminatory labour market practices and structures.

A key sub-finding concerns how structure can mediate the function of migrant agency in the integration process. The chapter finds that the availability or non-availability of integration support affects the level of agency drawn on – for example, resilience, reworking, or resistance – and breaks down the implications for integration programme planning. The material social responses of the group participating in the official integration programme were bounded by its practices and discourses, making those acts final rather than instrumental. Conversely, non-participants who engaged instrumentally (in terms of means rather than ends) and freely, were limited only by individual capabilities. The latter group's strategies diverged from official integration discourse, for instance on reskilling and the importance of Finnish language skills. The dichotomy underscores three things: first, the significance of biography in migrant integration; second, the need to (re)-evaluate the match between migrants' integration objectives and official integration programmes; and third, the need to align the integration opportunities and paths of both groups.

Migrant 'agency' is increasingly put forward to emphasise the migrants' own role in shaping their own mobility and integration process. This helps us understand their ability to find their way through the dangers and barriers put in their way and avoid seeing them solely as passive victims of forces beyond their control. On the other hand, there is a danger in celebrating the presumed (and observed) migrant characteristics of adapting to and tolerating difficult conditions. We argue that as in the parable of the toad and the boiling water, the 'heating water' sector is where you will find most employed third-country nationals or where most will have their first job. The 'safe exterior of the pot' represents the other sector where natives tend to be employed and to which migrants aspire to escape. The danger is that they become used to the hot water. Accepting the need to be adaptive and tolerate difficult and unfair conditions is perhaps the only viable strategy for individual migrants, but this comes at a high cost to the individual migrant. Accepting a 'bad first job' is often a necessary and useful step in labour market integration, but even with this experience, the barriers segregating the Finnish labour market are high, and there is a danger of getting used to poor conditions of the secondary market – i.e., to stay in the heating water too long.

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IV

ESSENTIAL? COVID-19 AND HIGHLY EDUCATED AFRICANS IN FINLAND'S SEGMENTED LABOUR MARKET

by

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Essential? COVID-19 and highly educated Africans in Finland's segmented labour market

African migrants in the Finnish labour market

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to characterise the position of highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market and to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on that position.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper is based on the biographical work stories of 17 highly educated African migrant workers in four occupation areas in Finland: healthcare, cleaning, restaurant and transport. The sample was partly purposively and partly theoretically determined. The authors used content driven thematic analysis technique, combined with by the biographical narrative concept of turning points.

Findings – Using the case of highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market, the authors show how student migration policies reinforce a pattern of division of labour and occupations that allocate migrant workers to typical low skilled low status occupations in the secondary sector regardless of level of education, qualification and work experience. They also show how the unique labour and skill demands of the COVID-19 pandemic incidentally made these typical migrant occupations essential, resulting in increased employment and work security for this group of migrant workers.

Research limitations/implications – This research and the authors' findings are limited in scope owing to sample size and methodology. To improve applicability of findings, future studies could expand the scope of enquiry using e.g. quantitative surveys and include other stakeholders in the study group.

Originality/value – The paper adds to the knowledge on how migration policies contribute to labour market dualisation and occupational segmentation in Finland, illustrated by the case of highly educated African migrant workers.

Keywords African migrants, Finland, COVID-19, Labour market segmentation, Migration policy

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

COVID-19 affected the world of work and labour markets in unprecedented ways. However, societies had to find ways to keep workers working to mitigate its anticipated adverse socio-economic impacts (see [Guadagno, 2020](#); [International Labour Organization \(ILO\), 2020](#); [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\), 2020](#)). To curb the spread of the disease, most governments issued nationwide or regional lockdown orders that restricted free movement within and across national borders, resulting in the closure of workplaces for several hundreds of millions if not billions of workers worldwide. Immediate effects included mass unemployment, cuts in working hours and incomes, and sweeping negative impacts on trade, businesses of all sizes, and on the informal economy ([Chakraborty and Maity, 2020](#); [Guadagno, 2020](#); see also [ILO, 2020](#); [McKibbin and Fernando, 2020](#);

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OECD, 2020; Xiong *et al.*, 2020). However, a complete and nuanced understanding of the pandemic's impact on the world of work and labour markets at a global, national, local or sectoral level was not possible in 2020. Such an understanding is needed to effectively manage the short- and long-term social, economic and industrial impacts of the pandemic. This paper seeks to answer a two-thronged research question: What is the position of highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market and impact of the pandemic on that position?

The paper is based on an empirical study conducted in Finland between September 2020 and June 2022. It draws on Piore's (1979) and Reich *et al.*'s (1973) labour market segmentation theories to investigate how labour market structure, migration rules and the pandemic intersect and impact migrant workers' position in the host country labour market. Specifically, this study aims to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic and Finland's corresponding public health management measures affected the labour market position of 17 highly educated African migrant workers in sectors classified as essential during the pandemic. This is done by analysing research participants' work stories, collected via biographical interviews to determine and characterise their labour market position and identify how that position was/ is affected by the labour market conditions precipitated by the pandemic.

Empirical data consist of biographical work stories of 17 African migrants living in Finland and active in the labour market as employees, jobseekers and/or entrepreneurs before, and during the pandemic. Our data-driven thematic analysis focussed on turning point experiences as signposts for key themes (see method discussion in the study by Ellis and Bochner, 1992 and Denzin, 1989, 2014). The paper focusses on African migrants, a growing migrant group in Finland who are nonetheless the least favourably situated in Finland's labour market, and whose terms of employment, occupational growth opportunities, social protection and security amongst others require consideration (see e.g. discussions in the study by Ahmad, 2020; Ndomo and Lillie, 2020).

On the position of highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market, our data reflect labour market segmentation with characteristics of dualisation into secondary and primary sectors and further segmentation within the sectors. Our participants are concentrated in the secondary sector in typical low skill and low status migrant occupations irrespective of their education, qualification and work experience. Using care workers as an example, we show how African migrants' skilled labour is subordinated and "forced" out of the mainstream primary sector to maintain an apparent division of labour based on ethnicity, nationality, linguistic and legal status differences amongst others. However, these migrant occupations were incidentally designated essential by the pandemic, resulting in a paradoxical employment and work security for our research participants. Our wide-ranging analysis allows us to contribute new insights into how student migration policy and labour market integration practices in Finland reinforce existing labour market segmentation patterns and create structures for new segmentations.

Section 2 unpacks the theoretical framing of the paper and introduces key contextual details about the Finnish labour market and African migrants in Finland. This is followed by a presentation of the research methodology in Section 3 and the analytical discussion and concluding remarks in Section 4.

2. Labour market segmentation and African migrants in Finland

Migrant labour market scholarship identifies typical migrant jobs as dull, dirty and dangerous jobs that locals discriminate (see e.g. Anderson, 2013; Bade, 2008). This now banal characterisation, in fact, epitomises labour market segmentation, and when critically engaged, it draws attention to the proliferation of segmentation in modern labour markets including Finland's. Labour market segmentation draws on and perpetuates inequality making analysis of its occurrences in varied contexts imperative.

In a segmented labour market, jobs have different positions on a stability continuum and confer different social, economic and political outcomes to otherwise comparable people (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; Piore, 1979; Ryan, 1981, p.4) in a process that draws on stereotypes amongst other sources and perpetuates social inequality and exclusion (see discussion in the study by Rubery and Piasna, 2017). On segmentation and migration, Piore (1979) argues that modern labour market structures, characterised by an orientation towards flexibility and cost saving business models (Atkinson, 1984), develop a permanent reliance on migrant labour. This means that segmentation thrives where there is a ready and seemingly endless supply of new (migrant) labour (McCollum and Findlay, 2015; Anderson, 2010) and is thus essentially perpetuated by many forms of migration.

Existing scholarship covers several varieties of labour market segmentation theories. Segmentation as used in this paper refers to two of these varieties: dual segmentation and occupational segmentation within the dual sectors. Piore's (1979) theory of dual segmentation focusses on a division of jobs and labour into two sectors – primary (stable) and secondary (unstable) sectors. The “stable” end of the continuum features standard employment, extensive mobility ladders, on-job training and internal firm rules that keep out outsiders. The “unstable” side of the continuum is characterised by atypical precarious employment, high labour turnover, short mobility ladders and minimal investment in training and recruitment. Another element of duality raised in labour market segmentation scholarship is the insider–outsider positionality of labour versus stable employment and job opportunities (see e.g. Häusermann and Schwander, 2010). Occupational segmentation scholarship focusses on the finer fragmentation within the secondary and primary sectors that can be based on any number of logics (see Leontaridi, 1998; Reich *et al.*, 1973). Both dual and occupational segmentation are visible in the Finnish labour market.

To allow differential treatment of comparable workers, labour market segmentation uses and reinforces flexibility labour management schemes such as easy hiring and dismissal, occupational clustering and labour rotation (see McCollum and Findlay, 2015; Lallement, 2011; Anderson, 2010; Atkinson, 1984). Flexibility labour management schemes in turn reinforce segmentation. Flexibility schemes are also a typical adjustment strategy in times of economic crises such as the 2008 recession (Lallement, 2011), and now COVID-19. We not only look at how pandemic induced changes affected migrant workers' employment, but also probe how pre-pandemic labour market structures shape the pandemic time responses. The intersection of labour market segmentation, migrant policies and flexible labour market structures is central in our analysis.

Segmentation in the Finnish labour market, however, runs counter to strong egalitarian norms and institutional structures. Finnish society and politics are highly unified and consensus based, around the idea of a universalist welfare state that is often at tension with the also influential notion of Finland as a competition state, in which social institutions support competitiveness in world markets (Kettunen, 1998). Likewise, union membership is very high, and extended collective agreements cover most of the workforce, setting a floor for pay and conditions in most jobs. Precarious work as a growing force for deep poverty, in the sense evident in many other countries, is not widespread in Finland (Pyöriä and Ojala, 2016).

While the growing importance of precarity is recognised in Finnish research (Jakonen, 2015), effective universalist institutions in industrial relations and the welfare state have protected Finnish workers from the worst effects of precarity and labour market segmentation (Mustosmäki, 2017). Finnish employers have instead turned to migrants as a way of getting around this because for a variety of reasons it is easier to exclude migrants from protections. Not all precarious workers are migrants, and not all migrants are precarious, but the advent of migration to Finland since the 1990s provides Finnish employers with an exploitable group that often ends up in the secondary labour market.

As a result, nationality and ethnicity-based hierarchies are evident in recruitment (Ahmad, 2020) and in career progression (Ndomo and Lillie, 2022).

Of all migrant groups in Finland, African migrants (first- and second-generation migrants from North and sub-Saharan Africa) have the worst labour market integration outcomes according to employment, income, occupational distribution and growth, and social protection and security indicators amongst others (Integration Database, 2022; Ahmad, 2020; Ndomo and Lillie, 2020; Maury, 2020). In 2018, their unemployment rate stood at stark 28.8%; three times the population average of 9.7% (Integration Indicators Database, 2022). In addition to high unemployment rates, the employed are often underemployed and tend to be concentrated in ethnicised occupations typically found in the secondary sector of the Finnish labour market (Ahmad, 2015; Näre, 2013; Heikkilä, 2005; Jaakkola, 2000). Other studies of discrimination in recruitment have also shown that African migrants would receive the least amount of call backs compared to other ethnic groups despite having equivalent qualifications for the advertised jobs (Ahmad, 2020; Koskela, 2019).

Past studies also evidence an unequal distribution of third country nationals (TCNs), including highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market. TCNs are overrepresented in occupations in the social and healthcare sector, and in the low skill end of the services sector irrespective of their education, qualification and work experience (Ahmad, 2020; Maury, 2020; Koskela, 2019; Vartiainen *et al.*, 2016; Heikkilä, 2005; Forsander, 2003; Valtonen, 2001). Except in healthcare, these occupations are structurally characterised by little or rudimentary skill demands, low pay and precarious atypical forms of employment like shift based or 0-h contracts (Ndomo and Lillie, 2020). Participants of this study are individuals who moved from a sub-Saharan African country to Finland to study in at least two-year-long degree programmes and continue to habitually reside in Finland on a variety of legal statuses including naturalised citizens.

3. Methodology and scope of study

This study is based on qualitative biographical interview data of 17 sub-Saharan African migrants living and actively engaged in the Finnish labour market as employed workers, self-employed entrepreneurs or unemployed jobseekers (see Table 1). Our biographical interview approach drew on the study by Mrozowicki (2011), while data analysis drew on the study by Denzin (1989) as well as Creswell (2007). Interviews were conducted between September 2020 and October 2021. Interviews were done in English and each lasted 60 min. The biographical narrative approach was favoured as it allowed us to collect data with a longitudinal outlook, capable of capturing a holistic picture of participants' labour market position and its evolution over time. Data cover the pre-migration, migration and pandemic periods of participants' lives.

In data collection, we used an interview protocol structured after Adam Mrozowicki's three-phase biographical interview approach (Mrozowicki, 2011, pp. 265–267). In Phase 1, "spontaneous narration", we asked a single open-ended question inviting the participant to talk about themselves and their migration to Finland in detail. In Phase 2, "supplementary narrative questions", we narrowed the focus to work life history from the first job ever held in Finland to the current job or work situation. Phase 3, "theoretical question", was the most structured as it was used to fill in missing information crucial for our research focus – labour market integration experiences in Finland, and other life stories relevant for interpretation. Our analytical approach combined the general qualitative technique of data-driven thematic analysis (Creswell, 2007) with Denzin's (1989) interpretive biographic tool of turning points as signposts of key themes. In analysis, first, we read the transcribed interviews through and secondly located each research participant in a social group – employed, unemployed and self-employed. Next, we identified key turning point events

Participant	Gender	Employment status/ occupation	Contract type	Education/ qualification from Finland	Country of origin	Residence in Finland (years)	African migrants in the Finnish labour market
1	M	Nurse assistant	Shift based and open- ended 0-h contract	M.A., Sport Science and Bachelor of Healthcare	Nigeria	6	
2	F	Nurse assistant	Shift based and open- ended 0-h contract	B.A., Business Administration and Bachelor of Healthcare	Kenya	7	
3	F	COVID nurse	Fixed term and temporary	CHEF/Culinary school and Bachelor of Healthcare	Kenya	9	
4	F	Practical nurse	Fixed term temporary	Degree in restaurant and catering, Bachelor of Healthcare and M.A. in Healthcare and Social Services	Gambia	24	
5	F	Acute/ Registered nurse	Permanent	M.A., Intercultural Communication, Bachelor of Healthcare and M.A. in healthcare and social services	Cameroon	15	
6	F	Practical nurse	Shift based and open- ended 0- h contract	B.A. in marketing and Bachelor of Healthcare	Ghana	8	
7	F	Practical nurse	Fixed term and temporary	Bachelor of Healthcare	Kenya	6	
8	F	Practical nurse	Permanent	Mid-study switch to Bachelor of Healthcare	Kenya	13	
9	F	Practical nurse	Permanent	Mid-study switch to Bachelor of Healthcare	Ghana	16	
10	M	Cleaner and food courier	Permanent (cleaning) and independent contractor (food courier)	MSC, Biological and Environmental Science	Ghana	4	
11	M	Cleaning	Permanent	MSC, Information Systems	Ghana	5	
12	M	Food preparation assistant	Permanent	BSC, Software Engineering	Kenya	12	
13	M	Food preparation assistant	Permanent	BSC, Information systems	Kenya	14	
14	M	Food courier	Independent contractor (food courier)	M.Sc. Social and Public Policy	Ghana	5	

Table 1.
Research participants'
biography
(continued)

IJSSP

Participant	Gender	Employment status/ occupation	Contract type	Education/ qualification from Finland	Country of origin	Residence in Finland (years)
15	M	Unemployed job seeker	–	MSC, Computer Engineering	Nigeria	13
16	M	Unemployed job seeker	–	MSC, Environmental health and Technology and Ph.D. in environmental science and technology	Nigeria	11
17	F	Cleaning and housekeeping	Fixed term and temporary	BBA, International Business and MSC, Corporate Environmental Management	Cameroon	7

Table 1.

(codes) that we categorised into themes that are explored individually in the analysis section of the paper.

We chose research participants according to a preselected list of occupations, and selection of later interviewees considered the content of prior interviews. We focussed on healthcare, restaurant, cleaning and transportation – food courier and taxi – sectors. Both sectors were classified essential for sustenance of life during the pandemic meaning they kept operating through the two “lockdowns” in Finland (Moisio, 2020). Additionally, a disproportionately large number of TCN migrants work in these sectors in Finland as employees or independent service providers (Ahmad, 2015; Forsander, 2003; OECD, 2020). Ten participants are women, seven are men, consistent with the dynamics of employment in these sectors in Finland; women are overrepresented in care work, and men in transport and logistics. Data collection, storage and analysis adhered to University of Jyväskylä data security protocols.

4. Analysis

In this section, we first situate our participants in the Finnish labour market by analysing their stories of labour market integration and their experiences with student migration policies. The second part examines the effect of the pandemic on participants’ labour market position.

4.1 Student-migrant-workers: locating highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market before COVID-19

All legal working age migrants with continuous residence permits in Categories A, B and P and asylum applicants who satisfy set legal requirements can work legally in Finland (Bontenbal *et al.*, 2019). Although all participants of this study migrated to Finland specifically for studies, all transitioned into the labour market during their studies and continued after graduation. This is consistent with the finding of a nationwide longitudinal quantitative survey that, on average, more than 65% of international student migrants remained in Finland three years after completing their studies for work and family reasons (Mathies and Karhunen, 2021).

Finland’s residence permit rules, especially the economic conditions for permit renewal for non-EU/European Economic Area (EEU) students like our research participants have a direct impact on their labour market entry and labour market integration in proceeding years. All 17 participants took up their first jobs in Finland to cover upkeep costs and, most importantly, to raise the annual 6,720-Euro savings requirement for residence permit renewal. Before April 2022, all non-EU/EEA students entered Finland on a temporary fixed term renewable one-year class-“B” residence permit. Every year they had to meet three conditions to renew the permit: provide proof of progress in studies, private health insurance and 6,720 Euros in their own bank account (or an employment contract). The latter two demonstrate the students’ ability to live in Finland independently of Finnish social welfare. Both bachelor’s and master’s degree students underwent the renewal process several times. The student permit also allowed holders to work up to 25 h weekly during the semester, and unlimited hours during holiday breaks. Our analysis explores the impact of these two features of the Finnish student migration regime on our participants’ labour market position in Finland, drawing on common experience amongst participants that Participant 15 captures well in the following reflection.

... I realized that my quest for the IT job was not forthcoming and of course, you have to get your papers in Finland to continue staying. And how do you do that? You do that by getting work. So, I ventured into the non-skilled work just to sustain myself. But while doing that, I was also doing some educational development, I wrote my first Java certification in 2013, and second in 2016, because I’m actually a software engineer. All this while I was still doing these menial jobs, just to survive to get the four years [4-year residence permit]. After the four years of course, you have to wait to get the permanent. ... All this while I was trying hard to apply for these jobs, but one thing I’ve come to realize in Finland is that for a foreigner, even after you have been trained, the system doesn’t absorb you. It is set up for you to fail. And you have this feeling that you’ll be reduced to the bare minimum, you understand that it doesn’t matter how good you are.

Earlier research underscores the complex interconnection between the “student” and “worker” statuses of TCN students in Finland, categorising them instead in the multidimensional subject position “student-migrant-worker” (see [Maury, 2017, 2020](#)). [Maury \(2017, 2020\)](#) argues that the student migrant legal status in Finland, by design, creates vulnerable, precarious, flexible, cheap and exploitable labour for Finnish employers. Our data reflect the same, showing how the Finnish student migration regime skewed participants’ labour market entry, career potential and overall labour market position (see [Figure 1](#)).

Entry level jobs (1st -3rd year in Finland)	Participants’ jobs in Pre-pandemic era	Participants’ jobs during the pandemic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⑩ Cleaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Offices • Supermarket • Restaurant • Factory ⑩ (Hotel) Housekeeping ⑩ Newspaper delivery ⑩ Personal assistant ⑩ Food preparation assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⑩ Cleaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Offices • Supermarket • Restaurant • Factory ⑩ (Hotel) Housekeeping ⑩ Nursing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical nurse • Nurse assistant ⑩ Personal assistant ⑩ Food preparation assistant ⑩ Platform work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxi • Food courier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⑩ Cleaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factory • Supermarket ⑩ Nursing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical nurse • Nurse assistant • “COVID nurse” ⑩ Food preparation assistant ⑩ Courier

Figure 1. Participants’ job mobility before the pandemic

Like Participant 15, all the other 16 participants entered the Finnish labour market through secondary sector elementary low skill low status occupations such as cleaning and newspaper delivery. These were not their first-choice jobs, and neither did the jobs match their educational qualifications and skills, including educational training undertaken in Finland. Participants saw these jobs as bad, but inevitable – the “bad first job” (see [Ndomo and Lillie, 2022](#)). We argue that the inevitable bad first job is a product of pre-existing labour market segmentation structures activated and sustained by the continuous and growing flow of student migrants, who are turned into workers by the economic and legal constraints of the Finnish student migration regime. This is further underscored by Finland’s immigration policy objective of tripling international student intake by 2030.

The experiences of all 17 participants show that the economic conditions for renewing the student residence permit annually “forced” students into the labour market within the first months of migration to raise 6,720 Euros before the first permit expires. The dual pressure, to get a job and to do it fast and other intervening factors “forced” participants into low-hanging-fruit elementary secondary sector jobs only. Further, in the first years of migration, participants did not have Finland based informal networks or membership in relevant migrant communities and were unaware of relevant Finnish national and local institutions such as the employment office that are all crucial in job search and recruitment (see [Alho, 2020](#)). This is exacerbated further by the fact that international students are not eligible for official state sponsored integration services, including labour market integration programmes. Finally, lack of context specific skills such as Finnish language, poor comprehension of the Finnish labour market, statistical discrimination by Finnish employers and a 25-h weekly work-time limit further excluded participants from skilled jobs and other stable primary sector jobs.

In the resulting conundrum, on one hand, a group of student migrants with varied foreign higher education qualifications and work skills found themselves in an urgent and inescapable need of employment and on the other, primary sector employers with stable lucrative jobs had sufficient legal, social and economic reasons to not hire them. In the middle were secondary sector employers who had a steady supply of low skill and low capital – and from a dual frame of reference perspective – very well-paying jobs in cleaning, newspaper delivery, etc. and were willing to hire student migrants. In fact, student migrants are their target workforce for reasons such as flexibility and willingness to take up such jobs on much precarious terms. Courier work done within the framework of nominal independent contractual partnership with platform service providers Wolt, Foodora and Uber, in food delivery and taxi were another category of work open to all migrants. However, these were entrepreneurship-based and were more insecure than standard and even atypical employment.

Labour market segmentation theories can explain why our participants could easily access some jobs and not others. Firstly, dual labour markets segment into two sectors that are similar to the characteristics of the Finnish labour market our participants encountered. The first is an insider-only primary sector that is inaccessible to migrants and low working-class groups like women and youth. Here, high-skill high-pay jobs such as the IT job Participant 15 was seeking are protected by internal rules. In Finland, an example of such rules that our participants and past research identify is the requirement of fluent Finnish language skills for jobs that do not require Finnish language skills to implement. Rules like these predetermine labour–work allocation and segment the available pool of labour into insiders and outsiders.

All our research participants could find their first job only in the secondary sector, confirming the openness of the secondary sector to migrants, including students, consistent with dual segmentation theory arguments. It was especially easy to find cleaning and newspaper delivery jobs because first, some employers or subcontractors tailored their terms of employment to student migrants’ legal status needs. Posti, the main Finnish mail delivery

group, and its subcontractors typically gave its migrant employees (mainly night newspaper couriers) a permanent employment contract that could be used as financial security during residence permit renewal. A permanent employment contract also allowed a transition from the more precarious temporary B residence status to A status that includes entitlement to state social welfare. Also, cleaning service companies naturally favoured flexible working hours like morning or evening shifts that allow students to juggle school and work during weekdays. Secondly, these are the jobs that other students were already doing, and therefore recommended.

Viewed through a segmentation lens, congruence between migrant student circumstances and service sector employer strategies such as permanent contracts are not accidental. The flexibility on both sides is a characteristic of segmented labour markets, in this case one valued by both employers and workers. However, what we underscore in this analysis is the role of Finland's student migration policy in creating secondary sector workers out of international student migrants such as our research participants. Another critical point we raise is the secondary sector's permanent grip on workers that is further guaranteed by the incompatibility of jobs in the two sectors. The career advancement paths into the primary sector sought by our interviewees are disconnected from possible upward mobility paths in or out of the secondary sector.

For our participants, "the bad first job" was seen as a temporary detour in professional development to be endured until a better skill and qualification-matching job is found. However dual and occupational segmentation theories have shown that this is unlikely. Cross sector mobility, from the secondary sector to the primary sector is either extremely difficult or impossible. As explained earlier, internal institutional rules of the primary sector protect it from the external market and its "natural" labour demand and supply dynamics. After several years in Finland, including after completing their degrees, our research participants faced the same barriers to primary sector occupations as they did at the beginning of their labour market integration, implying sectoral immobility. Participants employed different strategies to improve their labour market integration potential, especially their ability to secure employment in desired high-skill high wage occupations in the primary labour market with varying results.

Participants relied on their agentic capacities such as resilience (surviving without attempting to change the source of strain), reworking and (occasional) resistance differentially (see [Ndomo and Lillie, 2022](#); [Berntsen, 2016](#); [Katz, 2004](#)). Notably, to rework barriers to skilled occupations, some participants requalified and/or reskilled by undertaking full training in high demand skills in Finland such as nursing and computer programming. In fact, eight of nine nurses we interviewed had retrained into the occupation, after failing to secure desired jobs matching their qualifications. Participant 5 who is a nurse today recounts her experience as follows

. . . I moved to Finland in 2006 to do a master's degree at X. And then after studying for about a year, I discovered that there would be no jobs linked to my program and that I wouldn't be able to get a job in the future. So, I decided to switch careers, and then I applied to a nursing programme.

Requalification and reskilling into high demand occupations such as nursing improved the labour market position of some participants, but only partially. Our participant's mobility into skilled occupations, and by effect the primary labour sector, was undermined by Finland's labour market structures of segmentation, ethnic hierarchisation and discrimination, and individual worker's own flexibility. For instance, attempts to enter skilled core market occupations e.g. in healthcare triggered a new division of labour that allowed employers to use participant's skilled labour without admitting them into primary the core care sector as should have been. Participant 7, a female nurse explains the phenomenon this way

... even though I graduated as a [registered] nurse, I'm not completely doing nursing work at my workplace because I didn't speak enough Finnish. Like, that's what they say. And you know, when it comes to my salary, I'm not even being paid the full amount of a nurse ... I can understand the language demand when it comes to nursing ... But then sometimes I feel like it's just an excuse as well. When some places don't want to hire us ... Sometimes I just feel like I'm being bullied because of this language thing. And not just me, but my friends as well.

In her reflection, Participant 7 hints at a well-documented but unproblematised challenge to the labour market integration of migrant care workers, especially doctors and nurses in Finland. [Näre \(2013\)](#) shows that an apparent migrant division of labour positions migrant workers unfavourably in Finnish healthcare. She shows that despite fast growing numbers of migrant doctors and nurses in Finnish healthcare since the 2000s, their acceptance and inclusion as professionals of an equal standing with their Finnish counterparts is very slow. Migrant doctors are overrepresented in public health centres where working conditions are eroded by New Public Management reforms, resulting in for example, lower wages. Subject to a similar migrant and ethnically driven division of labour, migrant nurses are systematically directed to the lower echelons of the profession such as elderly care, practical nurse and assistant nurse positions ([Vartiainen et al., 2016](#)). Additionally, deregulation allows proliferation of subcontractors and intermediaries and non-standard employment arrangements featuring precarity, social insecurity, declining working conditions, stunted professional growth and short occupational mobility ladders thus effectively materialising secondary sector-like conditions for skilled, ideally primary sector workers.

This analysis has traced the position of our research participants in the Finnish labour market before the COVID-19 pandemic in the secondary labour market, on the unstable side of the stability continuum. We have shown how the student migrant visa regime “forces” migrant students prematurely into the labour market, where an insider–outsider job market segmentation skews their entry to few secondary sector jobs. Their place in the secondary sector is sustained by segmented labour market dynamics that hinder cross sectoral mobility that we illustrated using the case of African migrant nurses trained as registered nurses in Finland but employed in subordinate roles with secondary-sector-like conditions, thus “forcing” them out of the primary labour market.

4.2 Effect of the pandemic on the labour market position of African migrants in Finland

4.2.1 Job gain, loss and rotation: impacts of COVID-19 on a segmented labour market. Two nationwide “lockdowns”, a national telecommuting recommendation, international and national travel restrictions, and individual workers’ perceptions of COVID-19 altered the world of work for most workers in Finland since 16 March 2020. In the interviews we conducted, research participants unpacked the effect of the pandemic on their work life in terms of loss or gain of work, employment or source of income. We analysed those accounts and identified workers’ own practices of adaptation, mainly, rotation between occupations during the pandemic as a third theme. We discuss these while drawing links to labour market segmentation and other structural features of the Finnish labour market that shape these practices.

4.2.2 Job gain (or retention). In segmented labour markets, secondary sector and periphery labour market workers are typically the first to become redundant in times of economic downturns or crisis. Our data show that COVID-19 had the opposite effect, at least for our participants. The very nature of the health crisis and the social and economic crises it triggered, determined the occupations, which are essential to its effective management free of the hand of the market or internal firm rules of core labour market segments. In Finland these included several low skilled occupations in the service sector (cleaning, food preparation and courier) and periphery health sector occupations (gerontology nurses, nurse assistants

and personal assistants). Therefore, workers in these sectors, though usually in a less protected and highly deregulated position compared to primary sector high skill and high capital occupations, found their employment and work protected by the pandemic itself. This is one part of the reason why out of 17 participants, only two lost their source of income because of the pandemic. Labour market segmentation is the other part. We go a step further and argue that labour market segmentation preceded and influenced the apparent work and income security our research participants enjoyed during the pandemic.

At the first peak of the pandemic, the Finnish healthcare sector anticipated the highest care labour demand prompting the sector to expand worker recruitment. This created opportunities for all healthcare practitioners in Finland, including migrant nurses. However, the experiences of seven out of nine nurses we interviewed show that the new hiring/employment terms largely adhered to pre-existing segmented labour market structures, thereby reinforcing their pre-pandemic labour market position. Therefore, in terms of employment, African migrant nurses had a positive gain from the pandemic in purely quantitative terms. However, nothing changed in qualitative terms such as the contract type, social security and occupational equality. One participant explained that more of “them” were hired as assistant nurses and practical nurses in elderly care homes to free “others” (Finnish nurses) for emergency, acute or other nursing work in the hospitals rather than giving them those opportunities. This division we argue was only possible because it was already structurally entrenched. In Finland, migrant nurses generally as illustrated in past research (Vartiainen *et al.*, 2016; Näre, 2013) and the experiences of our research participants are absorbed into the labour market from the very bottom regardless of qualification. Therefore, their subordination during the pandemic was merely business as usual.

However, the pandemic also created a new acute care nurse category for specific COVID-19 care needs such as tracking and monitoring patients and infections, vaccination and testing. “COVID nurses” worked from varied workstations ranging from school ground pop-up stations, to designated spaces within hospitals and clinics, meaning that “COVID nurse’s” job distribution cut across segmentation boundaries. Unlike other nursing jobs that are location specific like gerontology and medical surgical nursing situated in old people homes and hospital wards, respectively, COVID care work is done in multiple places and across demographics, and that alone can empower it to challenge the existing division of labour in care to some degree. Participant 3 and 6, both working as “COVID nurses” thought that being placed in the same workplace, as a Finnish nurse, to do the same work, under similar conditions could demonstrate the capacity of migrant nurse workers to mainstream employers and challenge their stereotypes about such workers. However, the lifespan of “COVID nurse” category is contingent on the pandemic that gives it a limited time frame to have an impact.

4.2.3 Job rotation. Intra-sectoral labour mobility, especially in low skill occupations in the secondary sector of the labour market happens especially where flexible labour market structures and flexibility schemes are widespread. Employers, typically subcontractors who provide a variety of services that differ only slightly in skill or labour requirements rotate workers across roles e.g. from school cleaning to hotel housekeeping in response to business cycles and market fluctuations. Occupational clustering is a business model by firms and subcontractors that groups jobs with similar skill or labour demands and increases firm’s service/product market as well as adaptability in crisis. Occupational clustering is easy to implement in the low skill, low capital and the low specialisation secondary labour market.

During (economic) crisis that affect labour markets like COVID-19, employers use flexibility schemes such as labour rotation within an occupational cluster to adapt by reducing costs and maximising functionality (Lallement, 2011). During crises, states may themselves recommend and implement market deregulation including flexible labour

management schemes. In Finland, one of the amendments to the Employment Contracts Act called specifically for worker rotation ([Työsuojelu, 2022](#)). Employers were not allowed to dismiss a worker who could be reassigned into another role in the employers' organisation. Our analysis illuminates the use of labour rotation across the essential occupations covered in this study, as well as the difference between employer and worker-initiated rotation. The analysis also explores the labour market segmentation and labour rotation intersection.

As already discussed in 4.1, the COVID-19 pandemic did not render our participants in secondary and periphery sector jobs redundant as expected of a segmented labour market in crisis. Instead, it made them essential and indispensable workers (see [Figure 2](#)). However, there were slight variations between occupations and occupational clusters in line with the nature of the health pandemic and management steps adopted by national and local governments. In our data we see a sharp rise in demand for food couriers (Finland typically works in partnership with platform companies) following a national telecommuting recommendation. Alongside this was a sharp decline in demand for (platform) taxi drivers due to the same recommendation. This prompted a worker-initiated rotation from taxi to food courier by e.g. Participant 15 and 16. Platform work, which was already growing steadily as a livelihood source for migrants prior to the pandemic was bolstered by the pandemic (see [Van Doorn et al., 2020](#)) and this is captured in some of our interviews. Work from home, remote learning and social gathering bans bolstered demand for safe digitally mediated services such as no contact food ordering and delivery.

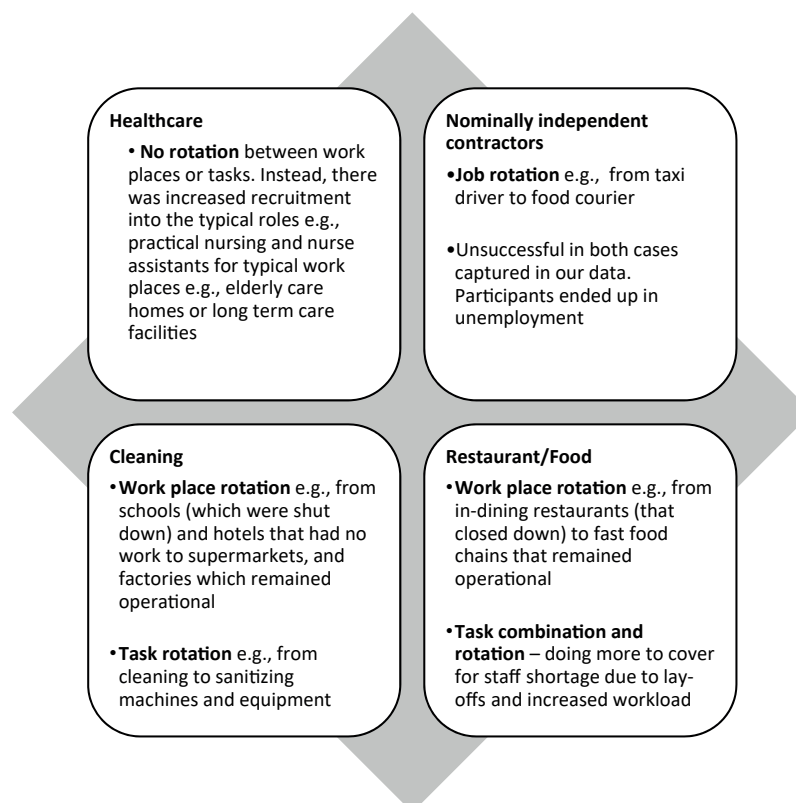


Figure 2.
Job mobility due to and during the pandemic

The cleaning sector also faced some disruptions linked to pandemic regulation such as remote learning, resulting in labour rotation. Participants with cleaning jobs like Participants 11 and 17 were rotated by their employers from redundant cleaning roles such as school facility cleaning and housekeeping to cleaning and sanitising supermarkets and similar essential public facilities. Similarly, food preparation assistants like Participants 12 and 13, were rotated by their employer to different roles to accommodate the shift in restaurant operations from indoor dining to complete take-away and food delivery service modes. Food couriers, who in Finland work as independent contractors providing services in nominal non-binding, non-employment partnership with platform companies like Wolt and Foodora experienced the least displacement from the effects of the pandemic. On the contrary, they experienced a demand boom which however Participant 14 who works as a courier for Wolt explains became levelled out by incoming migrant workers laid off from the restaurant sector, cleaning and other negatively hit migrant occupations.

A lot of people lost their jobs, like people who were in cleaning or dishwashing even those who were driving taxis . . . So, a lot of people migrated to food delivery. You saw people who were using their taxi cabs to do delivery, or people who were cleaners getting a car to do delivery . . . So, there were a lot of people who were doing delivery, on one side, and then on the other side, orders increased because people were not supposed to come to the restaurant and eat. So, sometimes the order increase but the number of people who were doing delivery also increased.

We argue, however, that the labour rotation adaptation deployed successfully by employers and workers across occupations was only possible because of a pre-pandemic labour division and segmentation structure in the Finnish labour market that created and sustained the occupational distribution and matching of our research participants to a specific set of low skill (clustered) occupations. Participant narratives also illuminate a “reworking” and “resilience” perspective to labour and task rotation towards the objective of “surviving” the pandemic period.

4.2.4 Job loss. Many participants would fall in this category; however, because of the mitigating effect of labour rotation, only two individuals, Participant 15 and 16 lost work or their active source of income because of the pandemic. However, we note that the two were already in the most precarious and vulnerable labour market position as they did not have a standard employment relationship with an employer that usually comes with social security provisions for mitigating socio-economic risks resulting from e.g. unemployment. They worked as independent service contractors for a taxi platform company without a legal or binding employer–employee relationship. The spread of platform work amongst migrant workers and the social insecurity inherent in it as an atypical work arrangement effectively situate it at the bottom of the secondary labour market sector. However, as permanent residents in Finland (a quasi-citizenship status), they were also amongst the most socially secure as they were entitled to state unemployment benefits that are not contingent upon prior earnings-based contributions. We argue that “citizenship” assured security undermined their adaptation efforts as compared to other participants in other or similar precarious labour market positions. Personal characteristics, including individual agentic assertion also intervened as in the case of Participant 16. With a permanent residence permit, a Ph.D. and two master’s degrees in a marketable science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM) field and 11 years of unsuccessful labour market integration attempt in Finland; he shifted from a strategy of resilience to a strategy he regards as a form of resistance. In December 2021, he relocated out of Finland.

5. Conclusions: theoretical contribution and recommendations for future studies

The objective of the research behind this article was to determine and characterise the labour market position of highly educated African migrants in the Finnish labour market and to

investigate the impacts, if any, of the COVID-19 pandemic on that position. Through our one-on-one biographical narrative interviews with 17 participants, we find that the job security of our research participants was largely not negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the nature of their work. However, they remained, as before, during, and after the pandemic, in relatively poorly paid and precarious unemployment, for which many were overqualified as a result of labour market segmentation through discrimination.

Our data analysis locates our research participants in low skilled, low wage and socio-economically risky secondary sector occupations with limited opportunities to transition into high skilled high wage primary sector occupations despite all of them being highly educated including having qualifications obtained in Finland. Additionally, the absorption of qualified registered nurse participants trained in Finland, in predominantly subordinate roles at the bottom of the Finnish care occupation tier, with low wages and weak social insurance show labour market segmentation based on migration status, and this continued despite high demand for healthcare workers during the pandemic. We also show these workers were in a situation of relative economic security in Finland during the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to the unique pandemic management procedures that classified the services of several secondary sector occupations where our participants were concentrated as essential. Most importantly (theoretically), our analysis identifies a link between the observed segmentation trend and Finland's international student migration policies which as our data shows, "pushes" participants into the secondary sector and periphery labour markets. Therefore, the paper contributes to the body of knowledge on how migration and labour market integration policies in Finland reinforce existing labour market segmentation and create new segments as illustrated by the case of healthcare workers in our sample.

Towards developing migration and labour market segmentation theories and policy interventions, our findings engage the question of sources of segmentation in varied contexts and the impact of that of the scope of interventions applicable in case of adverse effects. Migration and labour market segmentation research has typically attributed segmentation to employers' cheap labour and cost saving business models and migrants' labour standard and other behavioural compromises. We identify additional sources such as state competition policies e.g. Finland's student migration regime that we suspect affects international students from other regional blocs and continents as well, likely with variations. We therefore suggest that more empirical studies are carried out at varied contextual levels to comprehensively map the basis of segmentation, only after which policy interventions can be appropriately targeted.

This research and our findings are limited in scope by sample size and methodology. To improve applicability of findings, future studies could expand the scope of enquiry using e.g. quantitative surveys and include other stakeholders in the study group.

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