Mika Raunio

Should I Stay or Should I Go?
The images and realities of the foreign professionals in Finnish working and living environments

English Summary

6/2003
SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

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Contents

1 Attracting brains to Finland 7
   1.1 Introduction 7
   1.2 Foreign professionals in Finland 8
   1.3 The research questions, process and target group 9

2 Attractiveness of Finland in the global field of choices 12
   2.1 Why Finland? 12
   2.2 “Nomads” in the network of the global economy 15

3 Working environment in Finland; professional and relaxed but introvert? 18
   3.1 Work and career prospects 20
      3.1.1 Work and career opportunities for experts 20
      3.1.2 Work opportunities for spouses 22
   3.2 Improving cultural and communicative competencies 24
      3.2.1 Globally attractive “creative problem-solving environment” 24
      3.2.2 Management and mode of operation of the expert organisation in the Finnish context 26
      3.2.3 From the coffee break syndrome to multicultural mind-set? 30
      3.2.4 “Bridge builders” 31

4 Living environment from foreign professional’s point of view 36
   4.1 Disconnecting effect of the economic environment 36
   4.2 Services 40
      4.2.1 Information in English 40
      4.2.2 Health care and schools 40
   4.3 Physical and social environments 43

5 High quality innovation environment in high quality welfare state? 47

References 52

Appendix 1. / Questions of Internet questionnaire 54
Appendix 2. / Themes of personal interviews for professionals 58
Appendix 3. / Themes of personal interviews with foreign spouses 59
1

Attracting brains to Finland

1.1 Introduction

In the immediate future foreign labour will play an increasingly important role in the competitiveness of expertise-intensive firms and whole urban regions in Finland as has already happened in many other western countries in recent years. Due to high birth rates at the late 1940s and the early 1950s compared with almost half smaller birth rates in the early 1970s the number of retiring people will increase dramatically in relation to people entering the labour market. Labour shortage may be eased by educational reforms and by raising the age of retiring from the labour force, but one crucial part of the solution is foreign labour that should fill in the gap in the Finnish labour markets.

Recently labour shortage was visible in some branches of the fastest growing industries put the slowing world economy fades the visibility of even these shortages. However, the fast growth of economy in previous years gave the first ideas about the attractiveness of Finland due to labour shortage mainly in the information technology related business. Professionals from around the world came to fill this rather strictly determined gap on skills. This study aims to understand the key issues in attracting and retaining foreign professionals in Finnish working and living environments. Although this study focuses on professionals in ICT-industry, it should provide a wider picture of Finland and its industries abilities to attract labour force in immediate future. The approach is critical and selective in order to point out the major development needs and issues that weaken the attractiveness of Finland from the foreign professionals’ point of view. This paper focuses on working and living environments in general and thus more specific questions about work permits and other regulatory issues are not

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1 This paper is the English summary of Finnish final report: “Finland in the Field of Choices of Global Economy’s Experts” (Suomi globaalitalous osaajien valintojen kentällä), Sente publications 15/2002, Research Unit for Urban and Regional Development Studies, University of Tampere.
scrutinized here. It also should be acknowledged that problems are high lighted due to development orientated approach which may provide the quite negative tune for the paper, although respondents in general were quite satisfied with their living in Finland. Referring the latter, it should be stressed that individuals being quite satisfied does not mean that there are real competitive advantages that attracts and commits professionals to Finland when compared with other alternatives available. Thus, individuals’ satisfaction should not be mixed up with globally competitive attractiveness of the urban region or county.

1.2 Foreign professionals in Finland

There is growing foreign population in Finland, but the percentage is still relatively low compared with other European countries. Even more recent phenomenon is within the growing flow of foreigners; the amount of highly skilled foreign professionals coming to fill the gap of professionals in Finnish labour markets. The number of foreign professional workers is still relatively low and the meaning is more qualitative than quantitative. According to ministry of labour 12 609 work permits were granted during 1.5.-31.12.2001. 614 of these were for “information technology services” and 526 for the “research and development”. (Ministry of Labour 2002) Small numbers refers the fact, that Finland is not the traditional immigration country and still quite unknown place in the world map of the global professionals. The modest “flow” of foreign professionals is more filling the specific gaps of skills and knowledge in certain fields of business than creating the competing alternative for the Finnish labour force as such.

According to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), which defines skills in terms of skill level and skill specialisation, the share of non-nationals in employment in professional occupations is quite modest in Finland when compared with other North European countries. (Table 1.) In managerial occupations European average is even ten times bigger and in professional occupations five times bigger than in Finland.

Table 1. Share of non-nationals in employment in different occupations in EU countries 1998 (Auriol & Sexton 2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aus</th>
<th>Belg</th>
<th>Cier</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>Spa</th>
<th>Fin</th>
<th>Fra</th>
<th>Gre</th>
<th>IUs</th>
<th>Lux</th>
<th>Net</th>
<th>Por</th>
<th>Swe</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From three biggest groups, by professions, two are ICT-related if measured by work permit opinions. (Table 2.) It may be concluded, that there are two related indicators suggesting that Finland is entering in to global competition from scarce resource of skills and professional

1 ISCO 1: Production and operation department managers. Other (including computing services) department managers. General managers.
2 ISCO 2: Physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals. Life science and health professionals. Teaching professionals. Other professionals.
ISCO 3: Physical and engineering science associate professionals. Life science and health associate professionals. Teaching associate professionals. Teaching associate professionals. Other associate professionals.
competencies. Firstly, in recent years Finland has changed its traditional status from emigration to immigration country. Secondly, professionals from distant locations (China, India, etc.) are slowly finding Finnish labour markets. These two phenomena derive greatly from the globalisation of the Finnish firms, internationalisation of their employees working environments and their internet-based global recruitment sites.

Table 2. Work permit opinions by profession and by country of origin 1.5.2001 - 31.12.2001 (three biggest groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estonia</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gardeners, garden workers</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>1369</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT-managers, program- mers, etc.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic and IT engi- neers and technicians</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of opin- ions</td>
<td>4344</td>
<td>3366</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>2148</td>
<td>11650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Ministry of Labour 8.1.2002) Favourable work permit opinion is not the same as work permit. Gathering of statistical data was initiated 1.5.2001. Only non-EU citizens need to apply work permit.

1.3 The research questions, process and target group

This study aims to understanding of key issues in attracting and retaining foreign professionals in Finnish working and living environments. Study focuses on professionals in ICT-industry, but it should provide a wider picture of Finland and its industries abilities to attract professional labour force in immediate future. The key questions are:

1) What are the images of foreign professionals of Finnish firms and Finland in general as a place to work and live?

2) What are the real-life experiences of foreign professionals of Finnish firms and Finland in general as a place to work and live?

The study process included:

- Background interviews (30 interviews) including:
  - Interviews with the people responsible for the recruiting of foreign professionals and other people who have a significant role in the process (relocation consultants, managers and HR-personnel).
  - Personnel dealing with these issues in public organisations of urban regions.
- Internet questionnaire for foreign professionals working in Finland (mostly in the field of ICT but 2 percent of respondents work in the field of biotechnology). The aim was to find out whether foreign professionals are satisfied or not satisfied with their situation and what factors affect the prevailing level of satisfaction. (556 answers).
- Personal interviews with foreign professionals (59 individuals) and their (foreign) spouses (33 individuals). Spouses were interviewed in order to enhance the understanding of the pros and cons emerging in the everyday lives of foreign families/couples.
The study was conducted between September 2001 and May 2002. The study regions were urban sub-regions of Helsinki (Espoo), Tampere, Turku (Salo) and Oulu (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Finland in Europe, study regions in Finland and number of inhabitants.

The views of the respondents are mostly based on a fairly long time spent in Finland. Almost half of the respondents had lived in Finland for at least three years. Typical profile of respondent was 34 years old European male with higher education who works in Finland with local contract and lives with his family or spouse (see tables 3-7). However, the backgrounds of respondents were quite diverse.

Table 3. Type of contract (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contract / Place of residence</th>
<th>Helsinki</th>
<th>Espoo</th>
<th>Tampere</th>
<th>Turku-Salo</th>
<th>Oulu</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent local contract</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate until assignment ends</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Gender (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender / Place of residence</th>
<th>Helsinki</th>
<th>Espoo</th>
<th>Tampere</th>
<th>Turku-Salo</th>
<th>Oulu</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Household type (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household type / Place of residence</th>
<th>Helsinki</th>
<th>Espoo</th>
<th>Tampere</th>
<th>Turku-Salo</th>
<th>Oulu</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Educational level (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education / Place of residence</th>
<th>Helsinki</th>
<th>Espoo</th>
<th>Tampere</th>
<th>Turku-Salo</th>
<th>Oulu</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters’</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Country of origin (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of birth / Place of residence</th>
<th>Helsinki</th>
<th>Espoo</th>
<th>Tampere</th>
<th>Turku-Salo</th>
<th>Oulu</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Europe</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East- and Central Europe</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India &amp; Far East</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA, Canada &amp; Australia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-East &amp; Africa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Europe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Attractiveness of Finland in the global field of choices

2.1 Why Finland?

The attractiveness of urban region may be estimated according to its position in target groups’ field of choices. The field of choices of international professional labour force consists of those opportunities that they perceive and consider as potential places to work and live. In persuasion of the professional labour force the competitiveness can be seen as attractiveness and a competitive advantage as an ability to attract and retain human resources more efficiently than other parties pursuing the same target group. Attractiveness does not only attract (pull) but it also retains (commit). The environment and the elements of attractiveness are here allocated into five basic elements:

- Creative problem solving environment (interesting and challenging job opportunities, size of the labour markets, working culture, etc.)
- Economic environment (salaries, tax-level, costs of living, etc.)
- Functional environment (public and private services, access to place, etc.)
- Social environment (friends and relatives, social networks, international atmosphere, etc.)
- Physical living environment (housing conditions, natural environment, safety, etc.)

Of the eight given alternatives in internet questionnaire to the question: “Why did you move to Finland?” the most often selected alternative was: “The interesting and challenging work” (33,5 %). However, “only” one third of respondents selected this as the most important reason. “Career opportunities” were the most important reason for 22 % and “Finnish working culture” for 9,4 % of respondents. “Family reasons” were the most important reason almost for the one third of respondents (31,7 %), but on the other hand also most often selected as the least
important reason. “High standards of living” was the most important reason for 10.5 % and “economic reasons” for 12.4 % of respondents. (Table 8) When the results from personal interviews are combined with the results from internet questionnaire, the most important reasons to come to Finland may be simplified as follows: Besides family reasons the interesting work and career opportunities attract professional labour force to Finland. Moreover, the interesting work opportunity is the most common reason to start pondering whether Finland is place to go or not at the first place. Further, interesting job opportunity is usually the precondition to arrive Finland, although it is not always sufficient reason to choose Finland amongst the other attractive international locations.

Table 8. Why did you move to Finland? Reasons from the most important (1st) to eighth (8th) important (%) (n=555)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
<th>7th</th>
<th>8th</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interesting and challenging work</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reasons (Finnish spouse, spouse’s work, relatives, roots, etc.)</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career opportunities</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exotic experience (curiosity etc.)</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic reasons</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and social network</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High standards of living (safe and clean surroundings, etc.)</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish working culture</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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It should be acknowledged, that general preferences for the location choice are much more diverse than those factors that actually determine the final decision (Figure 2). In most cases main motives and pull factors when choosing the certain location are work or family related issues, whereas other factors works more or less as preventing forces if perceived to be very low quality. In case of Finland, it seems that a move occurs primarily from one job to another, not from one country to another. The job has been landed before moving to the country, i.e. people do not move to a region offering interesting job opportunities and look for work there; it just so happens that the interesting job is located in the region. This dynamics is more pronounced in the case of Finland, since the general images are not particularly strong and/or attractive. Exceptions to this are those whose move is based on social relations or in most cases more specifically family reasons.
Figure 2. “Evaluate the importance of the following factors when choosing an international location to work and live”
In addition, the experts did include to some extent those seeking a change for quality of life, but in most cases their main reason for moving was either former experience of Finland or economic reasons. In the case of the latter some came to this country under special contracts in which the salary was higher than local salaries. Thus, the decision to move in both groups stressing the quality of life, was in most cases linked not to an attractive image of Finland but to former experience and more often financial benefits.

Depending on the field and values of the top professionals the various elements of attractiveness were weighted in different ways. Competitive advantage always emerges in relation to the other opportunities in the field, thus the elements of attractiveness are weighted in different ways depending on the field of choices in which the professional attaches value to the various factors. For example, in Finland economic wellbeing and job markets do not play so great a role in attractiveness seen from North America or North Europe as from Central Europe or the Far East. The spearhead of attractiveness stresses interesting and challenging work opportunities, but the weighting varies according to groups coming from different job markets and economic conditions.

2.2 “Nomads” in the network of the global economy

Thus, in a pointed way the competition takes place in the global field of choices of professionals, where global network consists of labour markets provides the base for the field and emerging attracting opportunities. Two main methods of seeking a new job were: contacting friends or people met through work (professional contacts) and searching the Internet.

![Bar chart showing how did you hear about opportunities in Finland? (%)(N=544)](image-url)

Figure 3. “How did you hear about opportunities in Finland?” (%) (N=544)
This intensive use of various social and virtual networks is rather characteristic of migrants and is certainly a result of global corporations’ world wide operations and professional contacts from which such opportunities can be derived. Although personal relationships are still very important when professionals seek work from global field, the importance of Internet constantly grows. About one third of respondents perceived opportunities of Finland through Internet. (Figure 3) Through these channels Finland and its urban regions and firms may enter into field of global competition from professionals, or with other words into professionals’ global field of choices.

Defining the target group of this study as “global economy’s experts”, refers not only to applied expertise but also to the capability to seek job opportunities internationally. Definition of the target group by professional expertise is essential here as many regulations on (work) permits appertaining to availability concern specific fields. In addition, enterprises in the global economy’s network and the channels they have created are also connected to the structure of the certain lines of business. Moreover, the rapid growth in the field of ICT in recent years served to set in motion a migration of global economy’s nomads and is a contributing factor in the genesis of the new “fusion culture”. Fusion culture refers to lower barriers in interaction between different cultures due to common values and mind-sets obtained from international and multicultural working and living environments. Growing cultural competence is increasingly characteristic for individuals working in international and multicultural environments and especially for those working abroad.

According to this study and earlier migration related studies, global economy’s experts can by way of simplification be divided into three groups according to their moving motives:

- **Global economy’s nomads** consider moving if work and career opportunities which are more tempting than at present should emerge. Global economy’s nomads move from one country to another in periods of one year or several years. Their objective is not to integrate into the local culture but rather into its global culture.

- **Quality of life -migrants** consider moving if it is assumed that some other area offers a clearly superior quality of life or an environment corresponding more closely to the desired way of life than their present domicile. These people are seeking for a permanent place to stay and their objective is to integrate into the local culture.

- **Social relations -migrants** have a motivation to integrate dependent on the intended permanency of the move, i.e. in the last instance on the individual or community which has been the main motivation for moving. Moving is considered if social relations deemed important or family ties are beyond the present place of domicile or about to move there (e.g. highly educated spouses).

Nomadic life-style in the global economy is rendered possible by global applicability of professional labour force’s skills and knowledge and a “network of global economy”, which supports mobility of skilled labour. For example, in the field of ICT and biotechnology expertise can frequently be applied throughout the world, which gives the individual an opportunity to make employers compete internationally for the most interesting and challenging jobs. Mobility in the field of choices is increased by the internationalisation of experts and the changed dynamics of the labour markets, in which no commitment is made to a single job or employer.
for as long a period as was formerly the case. The career consists of numerous episodes and changing jobs is a part of career development and way of life.

Mobility is also emphasised at certain phases of life for global economy’s experts. The nomadic life-style and appreciation of a more permanent domicile varies as the family relations and life situations of the individual vary. All experts in global economy are characterised to some extent by “nomadic life-style”, while for some this persists throughout their lives. Frequently, however wandering is associated with those stages of a person’s life in which the ties to a given place are tenuous. The images that attracted the nomads were not connected so much to Finland as to job and career prospects. To exaggerate, nomads were attracted by images with three different emphases:

- “High fliers” perceive a job opportunity as a valuable stepping stone in their career development, the phenomenon “looks good on my CV” prevails. Thus, for example, working at corporate headquarters or in a certain product development unit may be more important than the content of the job itself.
- “Top experts” are interested in the content of the job and the challenges it provides and the opportunity to develop their own expertise and professional networks.
- “Adventurers” perceive an interesting job opportunity and above all an exotic and exciting chance to experience something different. A clear image of Finland is not essential; it is the exotic nature of the image which is interesting.

One could say that the global economy’s network from the perspective of the expert consists of expertise intensive enterprises or other organisations recruiting internationally and their regional concentrations. In this network formed by organisations providing job opportunities experts move along routes created by states, regions and firms. Increased interactivity and the connections between the nodes of the network have the effect of “shrinking” distances within the global economy network both in respect of time and of culture. This is seen in the habit of global experts of conceiving of the world and forming images of the surrounding reality. Internationally mobile experts do not perceive the world to consist of nation-states and cities only, but rather increasingly of a global economy’s network; network of nodes consisting centres of their own particular expertise and job markets. Such an image is frequently consciously formed when working in an international environment and especially when the individual considers an international relocation as a personal opportunity.
3

Working environment in Finland; professional and relaxed but introvert?

Professionals working in Finland found their work interesting and challenging. In addition, despite the modest amount of social interaction the Finnish working atmosphere was felt to be pleasant and less competitive than in many other countries. In working life the point of departure is not the pursuit of individual interests by tripping others up. This view fits with Hofstede’s (1991) interpretation of Finland as a country of feminine culture. In feminine cultures (the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark etc.) the ethos is “work in order to live”, whereas in masculine culture (USA, Japan, Italy etc.) it is “live in order to work”. In a masculine culture the boss seeks a friend for work, not work for a friend. The goal of a masculine culture is a performance society, whereas the goal of a feminine culture is a welfare society. (Hofstede 1991, 94-97.) Many of the interviewees emphasised the family friendly character of Finnish working life in long holidays which can be taken as agreed, working days which generally end at 5 p.m. and the option of staying at home with a sick child etc. Compared to many other cultures working life does a great deal to meet the individual and his/her family half way.
The working culture is non-hierarchical and it is easy to approach my superiors (N=554)

I prefer my current employer to others (N=548)

My current home region offers sufficient work and/or study opportunities for my spouse (N=501)

The working culture in my unit is communicative (N=552)

Career prospects in my current home region are good (N=552)

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<tr>
<td>Career prospects in my current home region are good (N=552)</td>
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<td>40.0%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
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Figure 4. Satisfaction with factors of the work environment in Finland

What especially required adjustment were the Finnish communication culture and the mode of interaction between people (figure 4). The absence of the discussion culture is connected both to business processes or the individual’s ability to participate and utilise his/her knowledge as a part of the organisation and teams and also his/her personal integration into the work community. By learning the interaction methods of the work community the individual also has better chances of utilising his/her knowledge as a part of a greater whole. This naturally does not concern only foreigners, but the phenomenon is emphasised when different cultural communication and interaction methods come to the fore in a multicultural work community. The prominence of the phenomenon opens up opportunities for the development of the communication and interaction methods of the entire (work) community by using exaggerated disparities between cultures as a starting point for the development process.

Poor communication and interaction possibly also inhibits commitment to a work community and thereby the preconditions for engendering social capital based on trust and close interaction. Thus communication does not only affect the contentment and working efficiency of individuals, but also their chances of participating and making their contribution to the key processes of business and competitiveness in general.

Thus, regardless some problems in communication, there is satisfaction with the quality of work and the general atmosphere. However, the prospects for advancement and career are not perceived to be equally positive. The employment prospects of foreign spouses in particular are seen to be poor. Chances for advancement and career are limited not only by the fairly small job markets in Finland but also by the fact that many companies are not used to hiring foreign workers. Chances for advancement are linked to opportunities within the companies
whereas career opportunities can be seen more widely as interesting and challenging openings within the regional job markets as a whole.

3.1 Work and career prospects

3.1.1 Work and career opportunities for experts

The foreign workers quite often perceived their chances of advancing in their careers within the company as slightly poorer compared to those of their Finnish colleagues. In some cases the respondents even took it for granted that when the choice is between a Finn and a foreigner for promotion it is the Finn who will be preferred almost without exception. The reason for this was considered to be the existing social networks in which people, who are already acquainted with one another, select each other as subordinates. The “Finn-boy bias” was seen in some top/middle management selections (vertical career path) to be clear, but in the case of the management of technical projects the phenomenon did not emerge (horizontal career path). In most cases the bias was not felt to be extremely strong, but there were also some highly critical views.

“I think it definitely helps if you are Finnish, in my opinion it is a fact. I’ve seen it again and again that Finn-boy gets promoted before someone else. It is matter of network of who you know. When you spent some time studying with someone or something it helps. If I think all my immediate managers and look all the way up to management line I don’t see any foreigners there. Technical groups are more open to foreigners but management circle is quite closed “

ICT-professional, Canada

If the top management of an enterprise is solely Finnish, this was felt to strengthen the assumption that an appreciation of Finnishness in the selection of leaders and making of promotions was part of corporate culture. This supports view of the importance of acculturation and commitment. Without genuine social networks and a true understanding of the modes of operation of the enterprise as a part of local culture, the chances of promotion are probably weakened, at least in the case of certain managerial tasks.

Many foreigners had nevertheless advanced in their careers and perceived their chances of advancement within the company to be good. However, in some of these cases there was still an assumption that being Finnish would have made advancement a degree more rapid. The respondents, however, still reported that the phenomenon was probably also pretty natural and real in many other countries and cultures. Possibly the mono-cultural society in Finland slows down foreigners’ advancement and recognition of their expertise more than in countries where cultural or ethnic diversity is nothing new. Moreover, the equality and reliability characteristic of Finnish culture and the emphasis placed on these as essential features of society served to exaggerate a contradictory situation in which the cultural and ethnic background of an individual is assumed to affect his/her chances of advancement in the organisation.

All in all the career possibilities, especially in managerial tasks, were perceived to be
better for Finns than for foreign candidates. The research could not establish whether this is really so; what is significant is the widespread nature of the assumption, which probably causes at least some degree of negative feelings towards the employer and the meaningfulness of working in Finland. Perception of the organisation as biased regarding representatives of the host culture and of other cultures may undermine the ties and trust with regard to the employer and be detrimental to its credibility as a truly internationalised enterprise. In this case it is more difficult for the individual to integrate to become a firm part of the work community, and the conception of one’s own poorer prospects compared to those of representatives of the mainstream community has the effect of marginalising foreigners into a community of their own and constitutes an alienating and demotivating factor. More often than not, however, the individual’s own development process was perceived realistically and no high-speed jumps forward in the career were expected. Being foreign and lacking social networks, however, was frequently only perceived to be a part - or sometimes to play no part – in the overall decrease of possibilities for advancement. Others were both the flat hierarchy structure and the specific expertise of the interviewees, i.e. there were frequently not many possible vacancies available.

In general many of the respondents were a degree more negative about career prospects more widely in the region where they were living than about the opportunities to progress in their careers within the employer’s organisation. (see figures 4 and 5)

![Figure 5](image-url)

Figure 5.“Finland provides globally competitive labour markets with good career prospects” (%)(N=553)

Seeking a new job in Finland was not generally considered as likely as going abroad when changing jobs. Thus the Finnish labour markets are not even in general the field on which foreigners living in Finland look for work. Those whose Finnish spouse’s work was tied to Finland generally constituted an exception to this. On the other hand the Finnish job markets
do not have a great deal to offer those who do not have a command of Finnish. In addition to the language problem the alternatives available were seen to be limited at least to some extent by the assumed ability of the Finnish enterprise to acculturate into the work community an expert with no command of Finnish. Indeed, this possibility had been given very little serious consideration, as it was more likely to change country if a change of jobs was in order and there were no personal ties to Finland.

3.1.2 Work opportunities for spouses

More and more experts going abroad to work have families, and both spouses are involved in working life. When considering going abroad to work the main questions generally concern the employment prospects of the accompanying spouse. Difficulties in finding employment for the spouse may constitute a preventing factor on the move of the entire family. Stress may develop between the spouses especially if the spouse, who has created a career in the home country, stays at home in the new domicile. This may lead to unsuccessful adaptation for the working spouse, too, or at least impair his/her success at work. (Harvey 1998, 309 – 310 and 321; Caliguiri, Hyland & Joshi 1998.)

Where global experts are welcomed into Finnish working life their spouses from less global lines of business encounter a different reality. Of the 33 spouses who participated in the present research only one was entirely satisfied with her present work situation and permanent job. Four other were at work, but on a temporary basis and were not particularly satisfied with their work. Of the spouses 26 had never worked in Finland in spite of efforts to find a job. All the unemployed spouses were sure that if the unemployment continued they would leave Finland in spite of the other spouse having a permanent job. For the experts’ spouses the poor job and career opportunities in Finland were a clear bottleneck (especially outside the metropolitan region).

It was not essential for the spouse to find work immediately, but having nothing to do in the long term will probably lead to a move since the spouse with globally applicable expertise has competence to find work in many other countries as well. However, many of the spouses were satisfied with a situation in which they could stay at home with small children if only a little time has elapsed since moving to the country and the adaptation process was markedly under way for both the children and the family.

The situation, however, is almost without exception felt to be temporary. People want to get into working life once the children have adapted and/or are old enough in their parents’ opinion to attend day care. From the perspective of those planning a lengthy sojourn in the country finding employment for the spouse is a precondition for remaining. If couple or family, however, remain in the country in spite of spouse being unemployed the financial well-being is undermined and may cause difficulties in the integration process of the spouse into Finnish society and social networks. The study by Törmälä (1998) also showed that the main problem
for family people was the spouse’s unemployment. If prolonged the situation could lead to difficulties in forming friendships and thereby acquiring a knowledge of Finnish. Social networks and a knowledge of Finnish would probably increase the chances of finding work, thus the situation constitutes a vicious circle (see also Törmälä 1998, 67-70.)

Problems in getting a job are generally due to language skills, but also to employers’ attitudes to foreign jobseekers. Some spouses looking for work had encountered prejudice against foreign applicants. They reported experiences of direct discrimination, i.e. the employer did not want to give the job to a foreigner, or then clearly poorer terms of employment were offered than to Finns. Generally Finnish applicants were given preference both from the standpoint of the employment office and the employers. The appreciation of foreign qualifications and work experience is likewise not very high in Finland. Another reason for problems in getting a job may concern difficulties with work permits. The expertise of the spouses may not focus on an area in which there is a need for labour or the employment offices do not interpret their expertise or training to be appropriate for the profession. The situation is thus very different from that of experts arriving with a job waiting for them and the perception of employment possibilities is considerably more negative than that of their spouses.

It is not just difficult job markets for foreigners which causes problems. If there are small children in the family, it may be difficult to find a day care placement when one parent is unemployed, even if there is an intention to use the time for studying Finnish or looking for a job. Without friends or relatives in Finland, the situation of a mother at home in Finland may appear impossible. The children must have day care placements in order for the mother to study the language and look for a job in order to get into working life. In order to get the children a day care placement, however, she must be in working life. Having once coped with this the spouse may set out to search the job markets, which take a negative attitude to foreign workers. Adjusting to being unemployed is more difficult to accept the longer the sojourn in the country lasts, the more highly educated the person in question and the more effort s/he invests in landing a job.

Thus work for the spouse is an extremely important factor, not only for the (financial) well-being of the family but also with regard to experts’ commitment and spouses’ adaptation. In the case of some international enterprises the content of the relocation services has been extended to support the spouse’s jobhunting and other means in order to cover her/his financial and professional losses due to relocation (Van Lines 2001; Harvey 1998). In practice the services have frequently concerned workers on assignment in internal transfers of the enterprises rather than people entering the country on a local contract. The extensive use of costly special services for all those recruited from abroad is hardly likely, but various applications, for example a list of alternatives would be worth considering. Attention has been drawn to the phenomenon on the international level, for example in the USA. There legislation has been proposed making it possible for the spouse of an expert coming to the country to work for a few months to
engage in paid work. Difficulties in employment of foreign spouses and experts’ conceptions of the Finnish job markets serve to increase the likelihood of a foreign couple or family changing jobs also changing country.

3.2 Improving cultural and communicative competencies

3.2.1 Globally attractive “creative problem-solving environment”

One problem concerning work opportunities in Finland seems to be the lack of potential occupations available. On the one hand this derives from the small scale of Finnish industries as such, but on the other the cultural competence of employers offering professionally potential occupations. Latter refers the view that quite many respondents brought up; they do not see many employers who could offer work environment that is international enough in terms of social and cultural modes of operation. Thus, by improving the cultural (and communicative in general) competence of Finnish employers not only the quality of existing working environments of foreign professionals improve, but also number of potential employers, i.e. work opportunities, increases.

From individuals point of view innovation environment can be perceived as a creative problem-solving environment referring to the work environment offering experts a chance to fulfil and improve themselves through challenging work. Thus, being globally attractive creative problem-solving environment is not only regional but also very much organisational phenomenon. At organisational level it opens up new future opportunities and is indicative of experts’ willingness to work in the most interesting and innovative operating environments, whose characteristics include a high-quality work and management culture with an understanding of multiculturalism. It also embodies opportunities to develop and utilise their expertise through official and unofficial fora, networks, institutions and/or organisations. (Raunio 2002.) From the perspective of the creative problem-solving environment the main questions are the cultural competence of the work environment and the ability of the Finnish innovation environment to adjust and act as part of the “global economy’s culture” and its multicultural expert community.

Frequently expertise intensive organisations adopt an individual-centred operating and management style in an attempt at optimal utilisation of the workers’ creativity, expertise and talent. For example, IBM, Texas Instruments, Nokia, Microsoft etc. emphasise respect for the individual in the companies’ operating culture and value autonomy and cherish individuality. Individuals are empowered to evince their own views, ideas and modes of operation as part of the company and the role of superiors is to create good preconditions for their subordinates and support their chances to utilise their expertise in autonomous processes. Power is delegated in such modes of operation, and the significance of the individual in the success of the company is stressed, which offers the workers freedom but also requires autonomy in the performance of their tasks. (Brown 1999, 118-124; Castells & Himanen 2000.) The following features are
characteristic of an “empowering” mode of operation:

- Individual’s have to accept responsibility for their own actions, but
- Individual also may make mistakes, as only through daring to try things out will they learn and be innovative
- The superiors foster partnership relations with the subordinate and are easily approachable
- The superior is not omniscient, but has something to learn from the subordinates
- The individual is accorded wide freedom in his/her tasks, but within clearly defined limits
- Individuals feel that they are a part of a larger whole and of a strategy in which they have an important role (privilege to make a difference)
- The individual is included in the decision-making processes which concerns him/her
- Individuals enjoy their work and they really want to do
  (Brown 1999, 118-124.)

These features were also emphasised as a starting point in studied work environments of experts interviewed. However, the influence of Finnish culture was apparent at many points, which possibly weakened the implementation of the objectives in the mode of operation. We are sometimes blind to the ways of our own culture, but to those coming from another culture the phenomena undermining the mode of operation described above are frequently very clear. The reason for bottlenecks in the “empowering” and individual centred mode of operation was, with some exaggeration, the communication and interaction culture and the perception of independent working.

In this paper it is not possible to consider the interaction methods of different cultures to any great extent, but in simplification cultures can be divided into cultures of high and low context (Hofstede 1991; Törmälä 1998). In high context cultures a verbal message requires more interpretation, because communication entails a great deal of non-verbal or tacit communication. In low context cultures, among which we can largely count Finland, matters are expressed in verbal communication, i.e. the content of the message is expressed in its entirety in verbal terms. However, when the verbal message includes a great deal of non-verbal communication the likelihood of misinterpretation increases. For example, Finns may experience difficulties in understanding foreigners coming from the countries of Asia as Asiatic countries typically belong among the high context cultures (Törmälä 1998, 30-31; Ali-Yrkkö et al. 2000, 102-103). A markedly hierarchical organisation supports a context of high communication and indirect expression. When divisions of power are clear and the respect for authority is great, an indirect way of expressing ones wishes and opinions is easier than direct expression. In discussion with experts coming from high context cultures it is important not only to listen to superiors and colleagues but also to follow the expressions of the interlocutor, his/her gestures and inflections; to read between the lines (see Ali-Yrkkö et al. 2000.)

Finnish interaction culture, however, embodies both oriental features (tolerance of silence, non-gesticulating expression) and occidental (western) features (direct and succinct expression). The adage “only say something when you have something to say” is a peculiarity of Finnish interaction. The small-talk typical of low context cultures is fairly alien to Finns, which easily
leads to an impression of being distant and difficult to approach. This impression is strengthened by the tolerance of silence, i.e. in Finland it is not discourteous to remain silent in company. (Törmälä 1998, 50; Trux 2000b, 299; Hämäläinen 2001, 40.) The work environment is not separate from the surrounding culture; Finnish culture is also reflected at the workplace. The main reason for failure to adapt is forgetting the role of local culture in the work environment. Merely learning about the work tasks and the operating culture of the organisation will be of assistance in the primary adjustment to the environment, but neglects the importance in adjustment of coming to grips with cultural knowledge and the new culture. (McEnery & DesHarnais 1990 after Sappinen 1992a, 5.) For those coming from another culture it is especially important to contemplate Finnish discussion culture, the mode of social interaction it generates and the appreciation of autonomous work.

3.2.2 Management and mode of operation of the expert organisation in the Finnish context

First the foreign worker must adapt to the management style and to the Finnish conception of power. The conception of power in the Finnish organisation emphasises people’s equality regardless of their position. In many other cultures, the role of the superior is also sustained outside the workplace. However, in Finland the role of superior is only one of all roles in social life (Trombenaars 1993, 74; after Törmälä 1998,23). Internationally, too, the non-hierarchical flat organisation is typical in expertise intensive organisation, but in Finnish work culture the small degree of hierarchical organisation is marked. The framework for action is created from similar structures, but the process experienced by the individual is only formed from the ways in which people act within that framework. Thus similar organisational modes do not determine the actual mode of operation.

The absence of hierarchy and easily approachable superiors is perceived as a very positive phenomenon beneficial to the working environment, also creating starting points for open interaction.

“It’s completely different (relationships between superiors and subordinates and colleagues). In Finland it is entirely informal. Hierarchy in our company is flat, that’s true in England as well as in Finland but in England there is always “them and us” mentality between workers and management. I’ve known people, who are friends when they are fellow engineers, if they get promoted to be a boss within the group the social relationship somehow changes. That’s different in Finland. I can go down to pub and meet my boss there and he has no problem to get drunk in front of me. In England that’s really . there is some kind of resistance for boss to do it.”

ICT-professional, UK

The information relationship between superior and subordinates may, however, render the foreign worker unsure about his/her own position or role. Many would welcome more precise guidance from their superior. (see also Törmälä 1998, 51-59.) According to Nurmi’s exaggerated view, the Finn is happy at work when his/her superior and responsibility are determined through
goal-setting and s/he is left to get on with the job in peace. Finnish self-discipline is high, and the Finn does not want to be ordered about, but to retain his/her autonomy, which is encircled by a clear and identifiable structure. (Nurmi 1989 after Hämäläinen 2001,40; Nurmi 1986, 13 & 1990, 101-102, after Lindberg 1992, 10-11.) Those who are accustomed to a different kind of culture may find a highly autonomous task difficult to accomplish as there are no clear instructions.

“You are pretty much left on your own with whatever job or task you start. So there is not very much guidance available and they expect you to find your ways to take care of the task and solve the problems. This is quite opposite to what I am used to previously.”

ICT-professional, Germany

Frequently the role of the superior is clearly less that of monitor and the worker is accorded greater discretion to accomplish the task than in a more markedly hierarchical work culture. Once tasks have been assigned it is assumed that the worker knows what to do, and if problems emerge s/he is assumed to report these him/herself to the superior. Finnish work culture stresses initiative; the worker must express a wish or state what s/he wants of his/her own accord. (Törmälä 1998, 49-51; Trux 2000b, 280-300; Hämäläinen 2001, 75 & 81.) If informal discussions are rare in such a situation and the individual is to cope with an extensive and loosely defined task, problems may arise due to:

• difficulties in perception of ones work as a part of a greater whole
• lack of clear objectives in the task itself
• even though the habit of asking spontaneously has been acquired, due to the two foregoing reasons the individual does not know what to ask, being unaware of what exactly s/he ought to do
• the possibility that the individual coming from another culture has not taken on board the “culture of spontaneous asking” as the superior assumes.

The problem emerges due to the strangeness of Finnish work culture, i.e. the superior and/or the work community have not succeeded in conveying information about the operating culture in a sufficiently comprehensible way. Either managers must be able to interpret the situation of their subordinates better and/or the subordinate must inform him/herself on the dominating mode of operation. In the Finnish work environment every individual is in principle in an equal position with regard to others regarding the voicing of his/her own thoughts and ideas. The management style stressing autonomy of work over discussions with colleagues may, however, appear authoritarian. The small amount of discussion may create the impression that at higher levels no heed is paid to workers’ wishes or opinions. (Hämäläinen 2001, 39; 84-85; Ali-Yrkkö et al. 2000, 103-105.) The absence of “surveillance” and active criticism may be interpreted as the manager’s lack of interest and appreciation of the worker’s work. A work task which is, due to mentioned reasons, felt to be “worthless” or divorced from the whole will likewise not motivate the worker to give of his/her best.

Thus, if modes of operation are interpreted without an understanding of the whole, it is likely that misunderstandings will arise. For example the popular emphasis placed on the
individual in global ICT enterprises may be interpreted differently in different cultures, in which case presenting the company culture without ties to the local culture does not yet reveal anything of how the company culture should be interpreted in just this location. Individuality in Finland frequently stresses initiative and autonomy, while in many cultures it is associated with being different from others, original, and rivalry, nevertheless in close interaction with others.

Perceiving one’s own task as a part of a whole and understanding the mode of operation may turn phenomena perceived as negative into positive phenomena: Absence of surveillance and an autonomous way of working are rather an expression of trust in the individual’s ability and respect for autonomy than indifference, but in order for this to be understood it is necessary to understand the differences in ways of interaction between cultures. When the mode of operation is understood and sufficient guidance to work and to local cultural habits are provided, it is likely that appreciation of freedom and initiative emerges. Through familiarisation those coming from hierarchical cultures, too, can generally assimilate the Finnish way of doing things fairly soon and come to appreciate freedom of work and easily approachable managers.

“I think that atmosphere is relaxed and managers are easy to approach if compared with Germany, where they were quite distant. I like this system; you have a freedom to express your opinions, whereas in Germany it is not so easy even to meet your managers. Here the informal system is very good.”

ICT-professional, Brazil

Although effort is expended on eliciting opinions, hopes and views, for example in regular development discussions between superior and subordinate, the small amount of informal and continuous dialogue may cause problems. In the worst case problems will emerge owing to the superior’s poor communicative ability in general – or especially with those coming from another culture – in a sufficiently comprehensible way. In a work community or unit in which no foreigners have worked before communication problems may come to a head owing to differences in both language and culture and also cause problems in understanding modes of operation.

“In the beginning it was terrible to work in here, because of lack of communication. Their ability to communicate was awful. It was combination of reluctance to speak English and language difficulties. It was very difficult to find out how decisions are made.”

ICT-professional, Canada

Communicative competence and cultural competence, namely the ability to reconcile two disparate approaches, are thus prerequisites for the leader of a team or unit aiming at utilising the potential of a multicultural group. In such a case the members of the group will probably feel that their task and their role as a part of the whole are much more meaningful. Despite the low sociability of the Finnish work environment Finnish management culture is appreciated internationally. Foreigners who have been employed for some time by Finnish companies are generally content with the directness of interaction, flat hierarchy and consultative management style. (Ali-Yrkkö et al. 2000,195, Trux 2000c, 324.)
Foreigners working in Finland, however, would welcome in their Finnish superiors the ability to lead co-operation, resolve conflicts and create open interaction in the work community. The Finnish management style, emphasising autonomy may for certain foreigners be something which actually delays adaptation if the task management, instead of leadership, typical in Finnish work culture is pronounced, in which tasks are primary and individuals secondary. For those coming from cultures emphasising sociability concentrating on the job in hand and the small amount of socialising at the workplace are demanding phenomena from the perspective of adaptation. (Hämäläinen 2001, 41 80-81 and 85; Törmälä 1998, 58-60; Al-Yrkkö et al. 2000,104.) Some respondents even estimated that the efficiency of Finns is enhanced by minimising socialising at the workplace. For example to enter another person’s office without a work-related reason is frequently not seen to be part of work culture even though managers are felt to be easily approachable.

Problem situations between colleagues may also develop due to communicating at cross purposes. For example in team work the habit in Finish discussion culture of talking about the matter itself may serve to reduce the likelihood of the Finnish experts evincing “half-baked” notions or ideas. In such a case in a group with only a few people coming from another culture, they, too, may tend to assimilate with the culture in which thoughts are not easily voiced when at the ideational stage. Likewise using English may have the effect of limiting the Finns already limited self-expression. In the worst case the discussion will be confined to the presentation of almost “complete” ideas and an interactive situation in which critical and varying perspectives on the matter are aired will not be achieved. Individuals coming from cultures with a more active discussion culture may leave good but only incipient notions unexpressed if the mainstream culture does not support their presentation or displays no willingness to support and contemplate possible surprising options which may be at variance with the general view. This suggests that the team is in the nature of a loose group of individuals with their own respective projects, whereas in many other cultures the team is conceived of as a much closer-knit unit. For those coming from a collective culture especially the Finnish conception of teamwork may be surprising. The team is not a close-knit group which commits individuals but a loos co-operation forum of independent individuals held together by a common goal. (see also Hämäläinen 2001, 36-37.)

From the perspective of being innovative it is essential that the openness of the atmosphere should not be confined to easily approachable superiors and colleagues only in the case of concrete and issues which have already been thought through. In some cases the teams’ discussion culture was found to be to become more open with an increase in the proportion of foreigners in the group. In this case the Finns, too, proceeded to express their ideas more freely. The evolution of a new discussion culture may be seen as a social innovation providing the team with new opportunities. An open and interested attitude towards thoughts still at the ideational level in the introduction of technical, social or organisational innovations supports
the development of a diverse problem-solving situation. It is indeed probable that the innovative quality of a multicultural community will not manifest itself only in the form of new types of problem solving but also as a social innovation, for example as the development of a new kind of discussion culture among members of the work community. What is crucial from the innovation perspective is the ability of the community to take on board, raise for discussion and promote different and even surprising proposals.

3.2.3 From the coffee break syndrome to multicultural mind-set?

The discussion culture and modes of social interaction also manifest themselves more widely in the work community as influential factors and not only in teamwork or leadership. The significance of discussions on matters outside work as builders of networks is an essential factor; they facilitate not only the interpretation of other people’s modes of interaction, values and thoughts but also make people feel they are part of a community. Factors with a deleterious effect in practice on this process include…

- No clashes along cultural lines were indicated, but it has been pointed out by many that foreign employees feel that they are missing out a bit on small talks and informal conversations during coffee breaks when the language of the discussion switches to Finnish automatically. This so-called ‘coffee break syndrome’ has turned out to be a recurring and important phenomenon, a symbol of the obstacles unconsciously created by Finnish employees to their foreign colleagues to full integration at work. While ‘helpful and kind’ during inevitable and unavoidable working counteractions, a vacuum is immediately created when these work obligations are not so binding any more. The interpretation and evaluation of this vacuum differed by each individual. Emotional reactions ranged from a positive motivation to learn Finnish to overcome the obvious language barrier to plain frustration and the feeling of exclusion.

- the extensive use of e-mail as a means of communication in place of personal interaction is sometimes felt to be a way of avoiding personal contact. Writing informal e-mail messages in Finnish for mailing lists and attaching a brief English summary is positive in one way, but in another indicates to the foreigner that s/he is not a fully fledged member of the ongoing discussion. His/her role is that of a bystander who is informed of the main points of the matter. Frequently e-mail messages in good English also emphasise people’s reluctance to engage in personal interaction as owing to the e-mail messages the reason for the small amount of interaction is not lack of language proficiency.

These problems, too are perceived realistically by many as there is understanding for being Finnish-speaking and on the other hand the individual could set about learning Finnish given sufficient time and motivation. Many people have experience of other cultures and compared to many of these non-English-speaking countries English is indeed used quite a lot in Finland, and also in informal discussions.

In many studies foreign workers have raised the issues of paucity of interaction in the Finish work environment (Törnellä 1998, 49-51; Hämäläinen 2001, 81.) The same phenomenon also emerged in the present study, but differences between units and individuals are frequently wide. To some extent there is also regional variation. To exaggerate, in the metropolitan area the phenomenon is perhaps less obvious than in smaller towns as there are more foreigners and this has wrought changes in the culture of interaction. On the other hand there are also
differences between Finns and excessive stereotyping is not necessarily useful. The interviews revealed a division which is rough but can be used to describe Finnish communication styles.

- Some Finns are open and it is easy to communicate with them. They actively initiate discussion without waiting for the other party to do so.
- Some Finns behave like a mirror; if addressed and approached in a friendly way they will reciprocate and talk and be friendly. But they do not necessarily come to knock on the door and initiate a discussion, they wait for the initiative.
- Some are introverted and act as if initiating a discussion is an interruption.

Probably most Finns would come into the second category. What is essential is to abstain from excessive stereotyping, also with reference to Finns. This is not a matter of Finns becoming more “talkative”, but of comprehending the difference between interaction styles between cultures. The ability to interpret both one’s own and the other party’s way of communicating is a resource for both Finns and foreigners in the multicultural work environment.

3.2.4 “Bridge builders”

Without exception the managers who had employed foreigners stressed the importance of expertise, i.e. if certain expertise was not available in Finland it must be sought abroad. If the view in recruitment practise are confined to expertise only it is likely that the breakdown in communications described above will occur. Yet managers hiring foreign workers have indeed recognised this problem. On the other hand cultural differences and stereotypes can be seen among the different units of large organisations or among experts coming from different parts of Finland, thus the difficulty of communication is not limited solely to relations between nationalities. For example, traditionally the communication among those working in marketing and R & D functions gives rise to problem situations.

“Oh yes, when you know the people personally, well then the stereotypes are either confirmed that he’s just like that or then they melt away. That that’s that person’s name and he’s like that and isn’t a stereotype any more. And then we’ve got stereotypes in the company, so that what are those people like who work in this unit and those in the other unit… and then different again in marketing.”

Unit Manager, Finland

At best managers who stress multiculturalism and leadership perceive clear benefits in a diverse personnel structure per se. A manager whose view on multiculturalism embraced other cultures than the citizens of different countries having ethnic differences between them also invested more effort in people’s adaptation and commitment on a personal level. A manager who invests in personal leadership and multicultural leadership may for example perceive relocation services bought from outside to be too impersonal and lacking in respect for the individual. In such units effort is also invested in Finnish proficiency, even though the working language is English. In such work communities adaptation to work and to society occurs under the “tutelage” of colleagues or superior or through a “buddy” system in which genuine ties between people replace impersonal services bought in from outside. By investing in personal management it is possible to create an atmosphere which is supportive of multiculturalism which is not limited
to taking into account the special features of different ethnic groups and nationalities but perceives the personnel as people and individuals by virtue of their special features. In such an atmosphere the differences due to national culture or ethnicity become part of everyday life in practice and integration into the work community is strong.

Through trust and informal discussion the manager can forge a relationship with the worker enabling functioning communication between them. Communication does not refer only to discussions, but more widely to the manager’s ability and willingness to perceive and interpret the worker’s actions and moods so that problems can be addressed before they become too great. Through shared activities outside the workplace it is possible to come to know one another better and thereby to gain a better understanding of the motives behind the behaviour. Informal socialising, various sports events and dinners, etc. serves to...

- bring down the most obvious barriers between cultures
- increase openness
- alleviate fear of authority
- develop courage and the ability to accept responsibility
- learn to give critical feedback first informally and later also formally
- being together helps in acquiring an enhanced understanding of body language and in learning to read between the lines, that is, to develop an overall communication ability.

(Maunula 1999,87.)

Creating trust and team spirit are also parts of this process and help to integrate workers into the work community. Here, too extramural activities have an important part to play. What is essential here is that the manager and the Finns should participate and that these events should not be a way for foreigners to “kill time”, which only serves more to pinpoint their difference from the mainstream population than to integrate them into the work community. The objective is not only to develop social relationships and communication but also to improve motivation and working.

“It’s terribly important that the Finns, too, should go along to these events. Typically it’s the manager, and it’s really important that the manager should go, you should only be absent it you’ve got a little one sick. When something is arranged the managers should be there. It pays itself back in terms of good spirit and contribution to the job if you take the trouble to have something, spontaneous or arranged. Especially when they come from a much more sociable community that it’s not Finnish “winter behaviour” straight off, although they do come down a bit from their own level.”

Unit manager, Finland

The structures and official modes of operation of the enterprise create the framework for “big policy on foreigners” within the organisation. The actual quality of the process “small policy on foreigners”, however, is made up of the managers’ and community’s cultural competence and commitment to the process. In the latter there may exist wide differences between units in the same enterprise.

As the Finnish enterprises go international and the work communities go multicultural the phenomenon has become increasingly evident and topical. It would appear that problems in
adaptation and commitment are largely due to inability to communicate effectively. This is not only a problem of foreigners; it is more widely a phenomenon concerning the work community and its members, new and old. Work communities and teamwork have frequently been researched via the roles of the individuals exerting influence. New notions on work community and the role of people acculturating individuals are emphasised in the multicultural environment. (Ramirez & Wallin 1998.) Acculturation and rendering modes of operation visible is not the duty of managers alone. It is impossible and inappropriate for managers in addition to their habitual expertise to acquire an intimate knowledge of the special features of all cultures. Thus the role of corporate culture in acculturation is important. Corporate culture and the special features emphasising local culture therein can best be conveyed to new workers by people already working in the enterprise, especially other foreigners and possibly people of the same nationality and cultural background. (see Törmälä 1998,22; Sappinen 1992, 10, Kettunen 1997, 185).

What is needed is bridge strategies creating new modes of operation for the work community and acculturating individuals to the interaction culture as necessary. According to Trux (2000) cultural bridge-builders have a bicultural or tricultural background. Profound knowledge of several cultures enables a person to see things from several perspectives at once. Such people are characterised by multi-dimensional problem-solving skills, flexible thinking and multi-professionality and especially by social skills. (Trux 2000b, 306.) The bridge-builder or cultural mediator may be a primary mediator who is capable of conveying knowledge between two cultures, being versed in the languages, values and habits of both. A secondary mediator uses a third language and culture in order to convey knowledge between two cultures. S/he knows the language of the second culture, and possibly also its ways and values, but conveys knowledge between the cultures using a third language. The organisation may also have the role of mediator, in which case one may speak of an institutional mediator. The significance of the cultural mediator is to serve as an “interpreter” between cultures with different modes of interaction, thereby finding, for example, the right ways to operate in the various target countries of an international enterprise. (Karppinen-Takada 1993,1-4.) Frequently foreigners are used as bridge-builders, but in order to gain entrance to Finnish discussion culture and work community the representatives of the mainstream culture also have a role to play. The role of a potential bridge-builder is represented for example by:

- “Tutors”, who provide guidance, for example, in matters pertaining to work and working life
- “Buddies”, who also provide guidance outside the workplace in everyday matters and in gaining entrance to the social network
- Managers, who provide assistance principally in adjusting to work tasks.
- The work community, whose willingness to adjust as a community to newcomers has a decisive effect on their chances of adapting to the work environment
- The personnel department and relocation services, who provide guidance in many practical problems but in some cases, depending on the extent of the service also endeavour to act as makers of a social network etc.
The “culture of global economy” facilitates joint action as a whole, but accommodating the role of culturally competent bridge-builders into the routine of the work community may in the long run become a competitive advantage in a globalising operating environment. Getting cultural mediators into the firm facilitates both the company’s operations abroad and a recruitment of foreign work force in the enterprise’s home country. When various cultures and their interaction and operating styles are known in the company it is also easier for foreign workers to come and work for the company. Cultural competence and communicative ability in an international Finnish company may even be an attractiveness factor in the competition for foreign labour.

The objective is not merely the acculturation of foreigners, but the developing of the entire work community as a part of the process. New cultures, the operating style of the enterprise and local culture create the starting points for the process. A shared culture of global economy may serve as a basis which for its part has already created many common features within the multicultural work community. What is essential is to recognise the problems ensuing in the meeting of different cultures and adapt special features of the local culture in an appropriate manner to be a part of a functioning “fusion culture”.

Knowledge of the communication styles of different cultures – especially one’s own is of value when operating in a multicultural work community and when communicating. (see Ali-Yrkkö et al. 2000). Knowledge of one’s own mode of operation is always the key, since the cultural stereotypes between individuals hold good with great variation and limitations. Stereotypes are seldom a productive point of departure; one must look deeper behind the stereotype and explore the many resources available to develop a discussion culture and the chances of creating social capital, also in a multicultural community. The characteristics of different individuals can be utilised in the process and in the formation of a work community culture. Thus the manager should identify the different points of departure of the workers and utilise this knowledge when managing the unit. Communicatively competent individuals can be made use of in “cultural mediator” functions and an effort should be made to activate “mirror-people” for the potential development of the social atmosphere. An effort should be made to activate introverts, but naturally the individual should be left with an option to withdraw.

The task of the bridge-builders may exaggeratedly be to develop the community’s communication culture as a whole and especially to integrate newcomers into the work community and into the community outside work if the latter is relevant in the case of the individual. For example, a global economy’s nomad may not necessarily feel that it is necessary to integrate immediately into the local culture, in which case it makes sense to initiate this process only when the individual feels that there is a need for it. Exclusion of the individual from all social networks is the worst possible situation and on the other hand isolation into a “ghetto” of compatriots or people of the same ethnic origin is something which should to
some extent be avoided. From the perspective of the commitment of expertise, social networks to Finnish experts help to form global expert networks, which are a potential resource for the area, also when the foreigners have moved away from the country. On the other hand foreigners frequently also form natural communities due to shared background and experiences, but this should not inhibit interaction with the mainstream population. The objective therefore is to develop cultural competence and communicative ability both at individual and community level in order to strengthen social capital and the innovation process.
4

Living environment from foreign professional’s point of view

4.1 Disconnecting effect of the economic environment

The findings of the present study confirm the combination of a) the fairly low salary level of highly educated people, b) the high taxation level and c) other taxes and pension contribution practices as a factor impairing the attractiveness of Finland for foreign experts. This is not only a matter of precise salaries and taxation percentages, but also the image and myth prevailing among foreign experts. Only six percent of respondents to the questionnaire were satisfied with their salaries while three percent considered their level of taxation tolerable (Figure 6).

The small income disparities in Finland due to progressive taxation policy and small wage differentials reflect the feminine culture and the value base of the welfare state. The aim is to ensure everyone a basic standard of living through the division of incomes, whereas in a performance oriented masculine society (USA, UK) poverty is seen to be largely a consequence of the individual’s own choices, and that society should not subsidise their way of life. (Hofstede 1991,97.) Thus feeling the high level of taxation and the low salaries to be a negative phenomenon is related not only to economy but is also a moral conflict emanating from a world view based on different values.

Although newcomers may be aware of the salary and level of taxation before arriving in the country, their implications often only emerge after adapting to the work and the country. On the other hand many people have come to the country on a better contract, but in many cases when the contract is renewed the financial benefits are reduced to local level, which often leads to problems. The level of income is also frequently compared to high-income countries such as the UK or the USA, when the differences are substantial. Table 9 presents a comparison of some extreme incomes and taxes in three European countries.
Comparisons are difficult and should be approached with caution and treated as rough simplifications of reality. Table 9 is merely indicative, but also pictures the reality described by many interviewees regarding the level of economic wellbeing in Finland. From individual’s point of view the economic wellbeing is often strongly associated with salary level and taxes, whereas free schooling, low child care expenses, insurance expenses and health care expenses are often more or less ignored. However, ignoring the welfare state’s services is quite justified view for single persons or couples without children who stay in Finland only limited period of time and do not need these services during the years they work in Finland. In exaggeration one could say that Finland has become “a country of cheap labour in research and development work”, which is a consequence of the small differences in income between different educational levels (Castells & Himanen 2001).

“When I was looking for another job, Finnish employers weren’t able to pay the “market price”. This doesn’t concern only my line of business; look at nurses’ salaries for example – no wonder they go to work abroad. If Finland can’t keep its own nurses, how it could attract foreigners to Finland?”

ICT-professional, UK

Table 9 shows typical situation for foreign families - but not typical of Finnish families - that only one of the spouses should go out work. Of the spouses interviewed in this study only one was doing work corresponding to her education, thus this unusual situation in Finland is indeed the case among foreigners. Although for most the level of income had not fallen so dramatically due to coming to Finland, it is quite often necessary to take a drop in economic well-being, or at least in net income when opting for Finland. In only 13 % of respondents had
the level of economic prosperity risen in consequence of moving to Finland. On the other hand this is indicative of the great appreciation of work and career prospects over economic factors in the choices of global experts, but can also be seen as a competitive handicap in both attracting experts and securing their commitment.

Table 9. Extreme comparison of income and taxation in Finland, Germany and the UK (TEK 2002; TT 2002; Juusela 2001,37).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual salary for M.Sc. (Eng.)2000</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle management and demanding expert task, annual income 2000 (USD)</td>
<td>41,000</td>
<td>82,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle income bracket single person’s income tax 1999</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-salaried family’s income tax 1999**</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aged 30-35, **2 children, one parent at home, salary 440,000 FIM

It has long been known that taxation is one bottleneck for Finnish competition from the perspective of enterprises and to a lesser extent also of international labour force (see Schienstock & Hämäläinen 2001, 43). Employers in Finland have long been concerned about the competitiveness of Finnish taxation. In Germany, for example, taxation has been seized on, where a taxation reform over several years includes a tax relief package for earned income. In Holland, too, an overall reform came into force as of the beginning of 2001 which involved reducing marginal taxation. Belgium has likewise announced its intention of reducing the top marginal taxation percentage to 50% in 2003. In addition to Denmark, Finland will soon be the only country in Europe to exceed the 50% limit on incomes of 33,000 Euro per year. (TT 2002,4.) Income tax has come down a little in Finland in recent years, but with reference to foreigners reforms have been slight.

The perspective on taxation differs between those only temporarily resident in the country and those who are relatively permanently resident. For example the progressive taxation of some countries vis à vis foreigners is seen as a fair practice. In this case the taxation percentage increases year by year and reaches local level, for example, during the sixth year of residence. This kind of progressive taxation is seen to be justified because a person only lives in the country for a few years does not feel s/he derives benefit from the free education prior to entering working life or from the pension benefits after leaving working life or other services for the elderly. The high taxation is not necessarily perceived as in high quality in the public services used by the target group and on the other hand those who live alone and childless couples use only few services. A progressive system would reduce the amount of tax paid “without benefit” during a short sojourn, and after living in the country for a sufficiently long period the realisation of the benefits produced by society in an individual’s life would “justify” raising the taxation to the local level. However, the “tax question” does not concern only income tax, but also taxation more widely.
“Taxes I pay would be justified if I was born or if I was going to retire here, but I am not and so I am not the burden for the state in that time I am here. So why the hell should I be paying and treated the same as those who have been or will be that burden? My tax rate is 48 percent and I pay 22 percent VAT. If I add all the taxes I believe I have 25 percent left in my back-pocket, I believe that my tax rate is 75 percent all in all”

ICT-professional, South-Africa

The importance of economic prosperity becomes topical at particular stages in life, and then taxation, salary level and the opportunity to improve one’s economic position somewhere else is seriously considered. Moving to a weaker economic situation than before is also a difficult step, although the experts do not primarily pursue economic success.

Although the taxes in Finland are high and salaries in R & D occupations fairly low there is more than this at issue; the general impression of Finland as a state with heavy taxes which subsidises free riders with the taxes collected from those who do the work. In many cultures appreciation of work goes hand in hand with the opportunity to gain economic wealth and safeguard one’s future and family’s well-being by working hard. In Finland there is practically no such opportunity; the level of salaries and taxation means that two people with a family “must” work, and the way of life is also shaped in such a way as to be partly dependent on the public sector regarding child care outside the family. This in part emanates from the principle of the welfare state to pay for public services, which elsewhere are paid for through private funds or insurance. An individual arriving from a different kind of culture is prompted to ask why one should pay the public sector which offers health care services, child care and pensions when one could pay the private sectors to the extent deemed necessary or even save for one’s old age out of better net income.

Although many of the respondents were aware of the positive effects of social equality as a basis for a more pre-emptive and secure environment, it is appropriate to consider different taxation and pensions practices as a part of international attractiveness (see Hjerpe, Kari & Lönnqvist 2001). Overall economic factors are more of a weakness than strength, and frequently they have a deleterious effect on long-term commitment.
4.2 Services

4.2.1 Information in English

Globally mobile experts are adaptable and they were in general satisfied with the services offered in the metropolitan area. Not many answers were found to the question “what could the urban area offer and what could the city do to improve its attractiveness and facilitate foreigners’ settling in?” The importance of being able to have information in English on both private and public services was stressed. Information in English on services pertaining to financial transactions (bills, parking permits etc.) was especially called for. On the other hand, to some extent this has already been done in various urban areas and respondents who had used the services some years ago reported that the situation had improved according to comments heard from other foreigners or their own earlier experiences. Thus the surface of Finnish culture is actively becoming more international.

In practice quite a lot of information is available and actors in both public and private sectors are continually producing guidebooks, forms etc. in English. The problem is frequently that of locating information, i.e. people do not know how to look for it or ask at the right places. Information is available on many questions asked not only directly from the organisations in question but also on the Internet pages of the various organisations (www.kela.fi/english/, www.vero.fi/english, etc.), but either people are unaware of the existence of these or then they cannot or will not find time to go through them. There are also pages offering a wide range of information for the target group and diverse lists of links (www.mobilefamilies.com, www.virtual.finland.fi etc.). Further to this the personnel departments of the enterprises, the relocation consultants, culture centres etc. offer information on numerous questions emerging. Thus the information is out there, but it is not always intensively utilised. On the other hand it is understandable that a person who has come to work in the country may not have time or may not locate this information, but this may well also be a matter of attitude.

4.2.2 Health care and schools

The general image of Finnish urban areas with well-functioning public services may be considered as strength. However, quite many of the respondents reported somewhat negative experiences for example of the quality of health care. It was felt that the right kind of treatment was not always available and the quality of service was considered poor, either compared to the quality in the country of origin or in general. The length of waiting times was also frequently considered unreasonable.

When availability of public services are used as an argument for the high taxation they should be in high quality. It should be acknowledged that in many countries with less developed public social security system, highly skilled professionals get same services from private sector through insurance paid by the employer. Thus, the services of welfare state are not
necessarily the competitive advantage when attracting highly skilled professionals who may choose their location globally at will, though they are important part of the Finnish society.

Figure 7. Satisfaction with the services of the region

It should be noted that the importance of cultural services and night life received the fewest mentions as being very important or quite important factor in the choice of place to live, that is quite the opposite to what many international studies suggest to be professionals’ preferred living environment. Thus, one may assume that those professionals looking for the “throbbing life of the big city” do not seek to come to Finland, but go to the great international centres. Moreover, there are some other studies referring the phenomenon that cultural amenities in general are not that important attractor for technical experts than they are some other groups of professionals. From this point of view and from this target group’s stand point, the strengths of Finland are rather the welfare services creating security and the functioning society, in which case criticism of the health services (and other public services as well) should also be taken seriously with regard to international appeal.

Another important public service is a school system. The departure is often planned in such a way that the children get to school in their home country or possibly in some third country - quite often an English-speaking one. This is less due to a perception of Finnish schools as being of poor quality than to an appreciation in general of the start offered by a different educational environment; an English-language or domestic culture as a desired environment for the children’s growth.

The school prospects are considered not only by foreigners already resident in the region; families with children who are considering a locating in the region frequently enquire about the options of teaching with English as the medium of instruction and/or an official international
school. Thus the demand for (public) international and non-Finnish-language education will probably increase, but due to a great extent to the level of Finnish salaries demand for expensive special schools is likely to remain at approximately its present level. The number of workers coming on special contracts, whose contract includes the costs of the children’s schooling (for example in official international school) will probably not show any major increase in the coming years, according to a survey conducted around Helsinki and Espoo. Respondents comprised 41 high technology enterprises employing a total of more than 20,000 people in the metropolitan area. These enterprises contributed to a total of 16 workers’ children’s school fees, and the number was not expected to grow the following year. At the time of the survey there were also open places at the international school in Helsinki (Nordfors 2001.)

Table 10. Which school would you like your child to attend according to the nationality of the spouse? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which school prefer?</th>
<th>Spouse’s nationality</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finnish with Finnish language</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish with English language</td>
<td>not Finnish</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official International school</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special pedagogy (Steiner, Montessori, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>368</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents, however, were not always very satisfied with the level of the school; for example the teachers’ level of English and even the English in some of the textbooks was considered inadequate or *Finglish*. If the expertise of the Finnish school system is not convincing it is fairly unlikely that foreigners will choose a Finnish school instead of a school in their own country or an internationally appreciated school system. The level of teaching in the official international schools especially and on the other hand also in the English-language schools or classes is easily evaluated on the basis of the purity of the language. In addition, it would be appropriate to explain to the parents of foreign children the modes of operation characteristic of the Finnish schools such as the freedom of the pupils and also school routines and other activities pertaining to school; as from the outside the phenomenon may even look like indifference. The feature of autonomous work emphasised in Finnish working life is also visible in the schools, but could be interpreted in a different (negative) way by someone coming from another culture.

The importance of schools is great, because from the perspective of permanency and new multicultural generations it is essential that parents be convinced that the schools are capable of offering a good enough education for their children. The intercultural skills of the teachers, for example, assume a more important position than before when the class no longer consists solely of children from the mainstream culture. Many of the foreign spouses stressed the importance of the educational culture and role models as a part of a quality school system. The Finnish way of educating, still interpreted as very “free”, may be seen to be problematic
from the perspective of good manners and the formation of a developed social identity. In the long run it is the schools which carry a great responsibility for the acculturation of second generation immigrants into Finnish society and on the other hand also for those leaving the country in the creation of images of Finnish society.

Naturally foreigners have the same problems as Finns in getting their children to into a certain day care centre or school or in always getting fast and efficient service when using the health care services. Problems specific to the target group as far as health care is concerned are issue linked not so much to multiculturalism but to the system in general. Another reported deficiency was lack of discipline and small amount of supervised activity, which is connected to the Finns’ conception of a possibly excessively free upbringing. The phenomenon is probably the same as at the workplaces and schools, i.e. that an emphasis on individuality and initiative is typical for Finnish culture, which is also apparent in health care services, schools and day care centres arranged for self-organising people. The same phenomenon could be observed with regard to other public services. The critique focussed less on the ability to take into account the needs of other cultures as on the Finnish culture which stresses self-sufficiency and autonomy.

4.3 Physical and social environments

Although the urban regions in Finland have grown, the cleanliness and safety of the living environment and the absence of pollution continue to be Finland’s strengths on an international scale. Considering Finland as a safe country does not clearly derive only political and economical conditions of society, but is related to some well-known and trusted global companies. One explanatory factor for the lack of effort to gather in-depth information about the country before moving there is undoubtedly the images of globally known corporations. For example several people identify Finland with Nokia, which acts as a ‘guarantee’ and ‘quality assurance’ for a secure life in Finland and future professional advance. The associated image of a high-profile, leading IT company in itself was a major pull factor and guarantee from quality of life for many.

As a living environment the urban regions are reminiscent of small towns and the Helsinki metropolitan region bears features of a big city. On the other hand the quality of housing is not always particularly high when considering top professionals, i.e. a prosperous section of the population. Nature may also be considered an attractiveness factor in connection with Finnish living environment. For example, among students Finnish nature was one main attractive factor (Hietaluoma 2001, 27-28). The four distinct seasons in Finland could also be something exotic for those foreigners who come from the South. On the other hand the coldness of winter causes practical difficulties and the long dark season could be depressing.
Figure 8. Satisfaction with the factors of the physical environment

Finland is not perceived as a particularly international society or one that easily opens up. Yet the widespread use of English and the public offices in which the attitude to foreigners is favourable offer a concrete opportunity to improve the attractiveness of the social environment in this particular respect. It is frequently the public offices that offer the first contact with Finnish society. Mostly the public offices are felt to be places offering equal service, but criticism was also expressed. In some places the treatment was felt to be bad because of the client’s ethnic origin. On the other hand lack of language skills in the public offices was felt to be a negative aspect, likewise illogical justifications for decisions. All the foregoing are probably in some way connected to some extent and frequently ignorance of the modes of operation of the public offices with their complexities may give rise to feelings of inequality of treatment.

Although the services of many public offices have been improved and the respondents were mostly satisfied with the services, this phenomenon should be taken in hand because of its importance. For example, the objective of the German “Green Card Programme” was to bring 20,000 IT professionals from India, but only a few thousand applications were received and one reason was felt to be the racist reputation of the country and the surrounding events (Forsander 2001).
Figure 9. Satisfaction with the factors of the social environment

Role of the individual factors in attractiveness and competitive advantage can be pursued via the following strengths and bottlenecks that in some extent make a distinction between “just pleasant” factors and those that really attract and retain people. (Table 11.) For example high quality of living environment is frequently considered important and respondents were very satisfied with the quality of their living environment in Finland. However, it is insufficient factor in order to prevent the decision to leave the region or country, if the actual motivating factors, i.e. those mostly connected to the job and social relationships predispose the individual to move. Frequently those planning to return to their country of origin reported social relationships as the reason, while those planning to move to a third country reported interesting work. The reasons for leaving Finland thus do not always relate to dissatisfaction with the current situation; the departure may be due to motivations coming from outside. (Table 11.)
Table 11. Satisfaction with certain environmental factors and plans for the future (N=556)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree or mostly agree (Strongly agree in brackets)</th>
<th>I will stay in Finland permanently</th>
<th>I will move back to my home country</th>
<th>I will move on to a third country</th>
<th>Total (N=556)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My salary and other financial incentives are sufficient</td>
<td>51 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td>34 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7 %)</td>
<td>(7 %)</td>
<td>(6 %)</td>
<td>(6 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career prospects in my current home region in Finland are good</td>
<td>60 %</td>
<td>45 %</td>
<td>52 %</td>
<td>55 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17 %)</td>
<td>(11 %)</td>
<td>(16 %)</td>
<td>(15 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My current tax rate is tolerable</td>
<td>43 %</td>
<td>24 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 %)</td>
<td>(6 %)</td>
<td>(2 %)</td>
<td>(3 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Finland my pension benefits are working alright</td>
<td>43 %</td>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>34 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12 %)</td>
<td>(4 %)</td>
<td>(8 %)</td>
<td>(8 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My current job is very interesting and challenging</td>
<td>87 %</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>78 %</td>
<td>81 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(48 %)</td>
<td>(37 %)</td>
<td>(38 %)</td>
<td>(39 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The working culture in my unit is communicative</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>66 %</td>
<td>56 %</td>
<td>66 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(28 %)</td>
<td>(21 %)</td>
<td>(18 %)</td>
<td>(21 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My current home region is safe</td>
<td>95 %</td>
<td>97 %</td>
<td>96 %</td>
<td>96 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(62 %)</td>
<td>(60 %)</td>
<td>(69 %)</td>
<td>(63 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My current home region is clean and unpolluted</td>
<td>96 %</td>
<td>93 %</td>
<td>96 %</td>
<td>94 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(63 %)</td>
<td>(62 %)</td>
<td>(72 %)</td>
<td>(66 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have been treated equally in Finnish public offices</td>
<td>77 %</td>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>60 %</td>
<td>70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(37 %)</td>
<td>(20 %)</td>
<td>(24 %)</td>
<td>(20 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The atmosphere of my current home region is open and approach-</td>
<td>67 %</td>
<td>42 %</td>
<td>36 %</td>
<td>49 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>able</td>
<td>(20 %)</td>
<td>(6 %)</td>
<td>(8 %)</td>
<td>(11 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Also contains those who had not yet considered the matter (28 % of respondents)

Phenomena like dissatisfaction with economic factors (salary, taxes) or social factors (communicative working culture, approachability of people) tend to be important “pushing forces” that increase individuals’ propensity to leave. For example, treatment in public offices was experienced to be equal less frequently by those planning to depart than by those planning to remain. Likewise those planning to leave felt less frequently that their place of residence was open and the people easily approachable than those planning to stay (Table 11). Being an outsider both in one’s own work community and in society is formed from many factors, but from the perspective of the individual it is clearly a factor which disconnects or even pushes from the region. High quality of living environment or safety will not be sufficient to keep experts in Finland if other factors are not right.
5

High quality innovation environment in high quality welfare state?

When factors inducing experts to come and preventing them from coming to Finland are combined with factors retaining (committing) them and disconnecting them, the attractiveness of Finland in the field of choices of global economy’s experts – specifically ICT experts – can be expressed in simplified form as in Figure 10. Images of Finland and its urban regions were not particularly prominent in the foreign experts’ field of choices. Information about interesting tasks had mostly come over the Internet recruitment pages and on the other hand through various global “bush telegraphs”. Both methods create an image rather of jobs and employers than of Finland, albeit focusing precisely on the targeted group. Images of Finland were fairly thin and stereotypical, and not very attractive:

- Prior to information on the opportunity available the image of Finland was still fixed on a cold and sparsely populated northern country inhabited by a taciturn people.
- To some extent – mostly the Europeans – were aware of Finland as a information society, i.e. of the heavy density of mobile phones and Internet connections and the accompanying business activity and some individual enterprises.
- The image of the Finnish urban regions, both inside Europe and beyond, is somewhere between ignorance and awareness. Taken to extremes, only Helsinki haphazardly makes it over the threshold of awareness.

Attractive factors that really pull professionals to Finland were in short:

- Interesting and challenging work
- Career opportunities and career advancement through “looks good on my CV” occupations
- Personal relationships
To simplify, the preventing factors were as follows:

- the rather low level of financial prosperity due to the level of salaries, of taxation and their combined effect
- lack of images to interest experts, thereby causing Finland not to be in the experts’ field of choices

Naturally for some individuals numerous other considerations may constitute preventing factors, typically the Finnish language, the climate, the small size of the cities etc. but in general their significance was not prominent. However, inducing or preventing images may not be considered the experts’ general image of Finland or the image of Finland in the world. General absence of knowledge to some extent gives rise to doubts about the chances of a country to offer meaningful job and career opportunities and on the other hand about a quality living environment. Firms of international repute which inspire confidence do indeed dispel these doubts founded on ignorance, that is, a location of a global enterprise bears a promise of a society which is functional also in other ways.

After arrival tendency to stay depends on how strongly region is able to retain individuals. **Retaining** (committing) factors of the region serve to reduce the probability of departure and **disconnecting** factors increase it. If disconnecting factors are very strong, one may speak of **push** factors, which increase the motivation to actively seek opportunities outside Finland. As a whole disconnecting or pushing and retaining or even “rooting” factors can be condensed into the following lists. To exaggerate, retaining (committing) factors are as follows:

- **Interesting and challenging work tasks.** The most important retaining factor was frequently work for which reason other aspects of life were endured to some extent also problems with adaptation.
- **A Finnish spouse.** Over 70% of those planning to remain permanently in Finland had a Finnish spouse or partner. The committing effect is emphasised if the couple have children of school age or if the spouse’s professional skill was linked to Finnish society (e.g. teacher).
- **Work culture.** Frequently a relaxed work culture free from hierarchies and having respect for the individual was felt to be very positive.
- **Peaceful rhythm in life at work and in private life.** Finnish work culture is to some extent less competitive than that in many other countries and on the other hand the atmosphere at work is often relaxed and the working environment pleasant. Similar phenomena were also to be seen in private life especially outside Helsinki.
- **Family orientation.** Appreciation of the family, in society and in working life, can be seen in long holidays, reasonably short working days and the opportunity to remain at home with a sick child etc. In society the family orientation can be seen more widely in the kindergartens, schools, playgrounds etc. maintained on public funding. On the other hand children’s appreciation of the family is not necessarily in evidence in the ways in which children are brought up or in family attitudes themselves.
- **Small-town environment.** The living environment is typically close to natural surroundings, safe and peaceful.
- **A well-functioning society.** The services produced by society and the private sector mostly work well, although they are not always very diverse or adapted to an international clientele.
- **Trust and security.** Society, officials and people in general can be trusted, which serves to make life less stressful and improves the quality of life.
To exaggerate, disconnecting factors are as follows:

- *The level of salaries and taxation in Finland*, which combine to result in a fairly modest level of prosperity compared to many other opportunities on offer.

- *Fairly poor opportunities for work and career in Finland*, because foreign experts are somewhat limited due to the Finnish language and culture. Moreover the prospects for career advancement are perceived to some extent to be poorer than for Finnish colleagues.

- *Interpretations of Finnish communication culture and independent work in an expertise intensive working environment.* The way of working, emphasising individuality and independence in an expertise-intensive organisation as applied in Finland, may in some cases appear to offer little appreciation for the work for the individual, the slight opportunities of the individual to exert influence in decisions concerning him/her and may inhibit envisioning the work as a part of a greater entity. This interpretation occurs mostly due to Finnish communication culture.

- *Poor employment prospects for spouses*, due both to the spouse’s lack of language skills, regulations in employment policy and attitudes of Finnish employers to foreign labour.

- *Possible disappointment with the level of health care and the school system.* In some cases expectations of public services are too high, due on the one hand to the images created for foreigners and on the other to using the quality of services as a justification for the high level of taxation. In the case of the school system there is also, in some cases, a desire to bring the child up in the sphere of the individuals’ own culture or in a less “free education”.

- *Difficulty in forming social relationships.* Although creating social relationships is always difficult in a foreign country, the problem is magnified in Finland due to the smallness of the foreign community, Finnish interaction culture and the fact that Finns are not very used to encounter multiculturalism.

- *Dark, cold winters* make life difficult and for some affect mood.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitive handicaps</th>
<th>Competitive advantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevent</td>
<td>Pull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Interesting job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary, taxes</td>
<td>Career opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Looks good on my CV” positions</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IMAGES OUTSIDE OF URBAN REGION / COUNTRY</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE URBAN REGION / COUNTRY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few work opportunities</td>
<td>Social relationships (spouse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty of building</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social relationships</td>
<td>“Slow” pace of life and work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible disappointment</td>
<td>Non-hierarchical society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with public services</td>
<td>Respect for family values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnect, (push)</td>
<td>Unpolluted, clean environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well organised and functioning society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retain, (rooting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Figure 10. Finland in the field of choices of global economy’s experts

According to Trux the reputation of Finland as a Nordic welfare state attracts at least those young experts who are looking for a “humane alternative to Silicon Valley”. The image of such an environment consists of the security of society, the cleanliness of the environment,
the efficient public services and the functioning infrastructure. Attracting and obtaining experts, however, requires that these be maintained and that the good name for having them should be sustained. Humanity may also be the balance between working life and personal life. (Trux 2000) Castells and Himanen have also classified Finland as a state combining information society and welfare society (ibid. 2001). Thus the basis for “the Shangri La of the new economy” would appear to be in place, which is confirmed by the respondents’ satisfaction with the high quality “high-tech culture” of Finland.

Alongside “Shangri La of the new economy”, however, there has also arisen the notion of “the Arctic Tax-Hell”, which was supported by the respondents in the present study. These rough but descriptive definitions may be seen to be interconnected and their relation can be stressed to those experts arriving in the country and those from other countries already living here. It is taxation and the arctic location which have carried the phenomena of “the Shangri La of the new economy” forward.

The high level of taxation is conducive to equality, enables a wide basic education, free higher education, many kinds of public services and especially public health care. Moreover, it is tax revenue which has also directly contributed to the development of expertise (the centres of expertise, TEKES funding etc.). Thus high taxation for its part lays the foundation on which Finnish expertise and its welfare state are constructed. Being in the arctic also has its role, as natural climatic conditions necessitate coping and the creation of a functioning and sustaining infrastructure in the various sub-areas of society. “The Shangri La of the new economy” and the “Arctic Tax-Hell” are thus different sides of the same coin, and between them a balance must be struck and an understanding achieved of the importance of this balance for Finnish society as a whole. Attractiveness can be enhanced by taking small steps in the direction of the “Shangri La of the new economy” making Finnish urban regions more foreign friendly and especially by developing innovative environments of the urban regions both in quality and in internationalisation. When attracting global professionals, the innovative environment should be seen from the individual’s point of view; what are their needs and wants and how they cope and adjust in this rather Finnish environments. First of all, what can Finnish innovative environments offer more than their rivals around the globe?

The experts who move to Finland in order to work are still a mere trickle, thus the processes which attract them and retain them should be made into a part of the existing structures. In the immediate future, as the domestic workforce diminishes, the flow will most probably increase, and the need for foreign labour and the accompanying strategies and practices will not be confined to the ICT branch discussed in this study; it will come to concern many other fields, both of high and low expertise.

Providing interesting work opportunities and pleasant places in which to live is the starting point for a globally attractive innovation environment for individuals. This kind of combination easily creates a framework that is too loose for development projects, thus specific target
groups and their needs should be carefully defined. “Target group” refers both to Finnish professionals who may seek work opportunities globally and foreigners potentially moving to Finland.

An attractive innovation environment should include possibilities for individuals to create global, social and professional networks, image creation processes (partially through these networks), specific services for specific target groups, and so on. The creation of attractiveness can be seen as a process that develops the key facilities of the local innovation environment, and by doing so links it with key networks on the global level through organizations and individual persons. Networks also provide cultural competence for Finnish participants and local actors, an asset that tends to be increasingly important in the face of global competition¹.

¹ The development concept answering to emerged questions and disadvantages was published as an appendix in Finnish final report.
References:


Appendix 1. Questions of Internet questionnaire

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AIMS TO IMPROVE THE CAPABILITY OF FINNISH SOCIETY TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM. PLEASE SAY EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK!

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Age: ______ years

Sex: a) Male  b) Female

Place of residence in Finland (name of municipality/town/city):

My workplace is in (name the town or city):

Country of origin:

Household type: a) single  b) couple (without children)  c) couple (with children)  d) single parent

If couple, is your spouse a) Finnish  c) Not Finnish

Are you in Finland a) alone  b) with your spouse  c) with your spouse and children

If you have children, which school would you prefer them to attend in Finland?

What is your educational level?
 a) Doctoral  b) Master’s  c) Bachelor’s  d) Undergraduate  e) Other

Have you worked or studied abroad before (more than three months outside your country of origin)?
 a) no  b) yes where?

I moved to Finland in order a) work  b) study  c) other

Which of the following describes best your future plans?
 a) I will stay in Finland permanently
 b) I will move back to my home country. - When and why (as far it is possible to say)?
 c) I will move on to a third country. - When and why (as far it is possible to say)?
 d) I have not thought about it yet.
**How long you have been in Finland** (total time, if this is not your first time)?
- a) less than 6 months
- b) from 6 to 18 months
- c) from 18 to 36 months
- d) over 36 months

**Do you try to maintain the customs of your home country?**
- a) yes
- b) no
- c) partially

**Were your preconceptions about Finns and Finnish culture correct?**
- a) almost completely
- b) mostly
- c) partially
- d) not at all
- e) What were the greatest surprises that caused the most problems (negative surprises)?
- f) What were the positive surprises?

**At the moment I work as a (type of a contract)**

**Do you think that Finland provides globally competitive labour markets with good career prospects for you?**
- a) strongly agree
- b) mostly agree
- c) neutral
- d) mostly disagree
- e) strongly disagree

**Do you speak or are you learning Finnish?**
- a) speak
- b) learn
- c) do not speak or learn

**What nationalities are your friends?**
- a) Mostly Finnish
- b) Foreign and Finnish
- c) Mostly Foreign
- d) Same nationality as I am
**With whom you can share your problems/troubles (you can choose more than one)**

a) my superiors  
b) foreign colleagues/friends  
c) Finnish colleagues/friends  
d) assistants or equal  
e) human resource personnel  
f) with none  
g) friends/relatives in home country

Please, answer both columns: what do you appreciate in general (white column) when making a decision to move internationally and what do you think about your current situation/home region in Finland (grey column).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN ONE: EVALUATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING AN INTERNATIONAL LOCATION TO WORK AND LIVE</th>
<th>COLUMN TWO: EVALUATE THE QUALITY OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS IN YOUR CURRENT SITUATION / HOME REGION IN FINLAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How important are following factors when you choose your place to live abroad?  
a) very important  
b) quite important  
c) a little important  
d) not important at all  
e) cannot say | What do you think about following statements concerning your current situation/home region?  
a) strongly agree  
b) mostly agree  
c) neutral  
d) mostly disagree  
e) strongly disagree |
<p>| 2. When choosing a place to live abroad challenging and interesting work is . . . | My current job is very challenging and interesting. |
| 3. When choosing a place to live abroad non-hierarchical working culture (flat organisation) is . . . | The working culture in my unit is non-hierarchical and it is easy to approach my superiors. |
| 4. When choosing a place to live abroad communicative working culture (easy to get information, easy to communicate with colleagues and superiors, etc.) . . . | The working culture in my unit is communicative |
| 5. When choosing a place to live abroad good career prospects are . . . | Career prospects in my current home region in Finland are good |
| 6. When choosing a place to live abroad salary and other financial incentives are . . . | My salary and other financial incentives are sufficient |
| 7. When choosing a place to live abroad a chance to work for a particular employer is . . . | I prefer my current employer to others |
| 8. When choosing a place to live abroad lively night life (clubs, discos, movies, etc.) is . . . | Night life in my current home region is lively enough |
| 9. When choosing a place to live abroad versatile leisure time activities and recreational facilities are . . . | The leisure time and recreation facilities are versatile in my home region if you disagree, please specify why? |
| 10. When choosing a place to live abroad an international atmosphere (attitudes towards foreigners, multiculturalism, etc.) of the place is . . . | The atmosphere of my current home region is international. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad a non-racist image of government and local government public offices and civil servants of the country in general is .</td>
<td>I feel that I have been treated equally in Finnish public offices. if you disagree, please specify why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad a high level of economic well being (wage level in relation to taxes and living costs) is . . .</td>
<td>My economic well being is now higher than before I moved to Finland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad being able to manage with English (outside work) is . . .</td>
<td>It is easy to manage with English in my current home region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad pension benefits in the country of destination are . . .</td>
<td>In Finland my pension benefits are working alright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad the local tax rate is . . .</td>
<td>My current tax rate is tolerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad an open and approachable social atmosphere of the host culture is . . .</td>
<td>The atmosphere of my current home region is open and people approachable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad the opportunity to study at the university level (basic studies or post graduate) is . . .</td>
<td>The study opportunities in my current home region are good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad the chances for my spouse to work and/or study are . . .</td>
<td>My current home region offers sufficient work and/or study opportunities for my spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad the cultural activities (opera, museums, art exhibitions, theatre, . . .</td>
<td>The cultural activities of my current home region are sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad international flight connections to and from the place are . . .</td>
<td>International flight connections to and from my current home region are sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad sophisticated &quot;high-tech culture&quot; (internet and mobile services as a part of the everyday life, high-tech oriented people, etc.) is . . .</td>
<td>&quot;High-tech culture&quot; in my current home region is high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad a clean and unpolluted living environment is . . .</td>
<td>My current home region is clean and unpolluted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad the high quality of housing available is . . .</td>
<td>The quality of my current housing is adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad well organised public services (health care, public transport) are . . .</td>
<td>Public services are easily available and well organised in my current home region if you disagree, please specify why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad friends or an existing network of friends at the destination are . . .</td>
<td>I have enough friends or/and a well functioning social network in my current home region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>When choosing a place to live abroad the safety of the area is . . .</td>
<td>My current home region is safe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. / Themes of personal interviews for professionals

0. Migration history – freestyle story, previous migration history and emphasis on the question; Why Finland?
   • Specific advantages and disadvantages that s/he evaluated before making decision to move (economic reasons, interesting work/career opportunity)
   • What were other alternatives, if there were any (at least not leaving at all is always one alternative)?

How or from where the information of Finland and other alternatives was obtained?

1. Work
   • Why did s/he choose this particular company?
   • How does s/he see her/his position in the company? (Is it easy to get promoted? Does the job match her/his qualifications?)
   • Relationship with managers/leaders and colleagues? (communication, attitudes, problems?)
   • Effects on willingness to stay?
   • How would he look for a new job (if s/he lost her/his job)? -From Finland, Home country, third country?
   • Any other plans to move somewhere (in Finland, outside Finland)? -> where? -> why? (most important criteria)

2. Tre/Hki/Oulu
   • Why did s/he move to Tampere/Hki/Oulu/Turku specifically?
   • Has s/he heard about Tre/Hki/Turku/Oulu before?
   • Do you find the city friendly? International? (Let them define ‘friendly’ and ‘international’)
   • What is the most important improvement the city should implement in order to make it more attractive/pleasant for foreigners to live? (international school, meeting places, services in English or something completely different??)

3. Social life

Who: defined by a) nationality, b) geographical proximity of person, c) type of relationship (kinship, friendship, other)
   • Who does s/he socialize with outside work? Why? (if same nationality, is it because it is more convenient, more trust, cultural similarity, trust?)
   • Has s/he experienced any signs of xenophobia? In what form and where?

General questions
   • Were her/his expectations met in general? Is s/he happy in general?
   • How would an ideal immigration place look like? What services would s/he expect? What kind of mentality would s/he expect from the local people? Is it possible to name any real “dream destinations”?
   • What phases of life s/he has experienced as the most difficult after arriving and what kind of help could have been useful in order to ease the situation?

Relocation
   • Has s/he been satisfied with relocation services (help with finding apartment and having idea how other daily things run) and other services provided employer in general? (If used any)
Appendix 3. / Themes of personal interviews with foreign spouses

Background information:
Age? Education? Nationality?
Children,? (how many, born before or after moving to Finland),

Short migration history (moves from the country of origin until now, the most important criteria or reasons for these moves?)
• With or without spouse and/or family

Case Finland:
Reasons why decided to come to Finland and to current home region (Oulu, Tampere, Turku, Espoo) in particularly? - Willing or “forced” by the situation?
Emphasis on these especially:
• spouse’s work and other intentions, (how important factor(s) compared with other reasons)
• own intentions (work, study, house wife, others?)
• How personal intentions have been filled? (what kind of problems or positive experiences?)
• Satisfied with the current situation? (Why?)

Social life:
c) Personal experiences
d) Children’s point of view

Integrated into social life?
• having friends? (finnish, foreign, both, any specific reasons if emphasis on other)
  • problems? What?
• experienced any xenophobia/racism
  • where or in what situation (public services, school, day care, health care, people on neighbourhood, other?)

Social environment suitable for raising the children?
• Would you like to raise your children here or somewhere else (home country, third country, other place in Finland)
  • Why? The most important reasons / criteria?

City /Finland and its services
Living conditions are better than before moving to Finland? (housing, surroundings, etc)
Experiences about the quality and availability of . . .
• day care, schooling, hobbies, health care, etc. (intentions to use finnish day care/ school facilities or international school or intention to have children educated somewhere else? If so, why and where?)??
**Hard times?**

Generally happy?

Any particularly difficult phases during staying in Finland? When, why and what kind of support or help could have been able to ease the situation?

- Who could/should provide that kind of help/service? (own or spouse’s employer, public services / organisations, etc.)

Willing to stay/leave? Why? *(And would they like live in some other city/urban region in Finland or in other country?)*

Anything else that should be noticed when improving the city in order to make it more pleasant and attractive for foreign families/couples to live in?
Sente-työraportteja

1/2001  Mika Raunio & Reija Linnamaa:
Seinäjoen seudun markkinointi osaajia houkuttelevana paikkana asua ja elää

2/2001  Reija Linnamaa:
Development Process of the ICT Cluster in the Jyväskylä Urban Region

3/2002  Markku Sotarauta & Juha Kostiainen:
Näytön paikka - Hämeenlinnan seudusta Suomen johtava täydennyskoulutuskaupunki

4/2002  Miia Perenius:
Growth and prosperity to all regions? - a comparative study of the Nordic regional policies

5/2003  Tomi Lähteenmäki:
Pirkanmaan kehittäjäverkoston analyysi