



# Employment Problems of Refugees in Finland

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The purpose of this thesis was to examine employment problems experienced, faced, and exposed by refugees in Finland. The theoretical framework of the thesis delves into the refugee and their processes, as well as the concepts and situations concerning employment.

In this thesis, the research method used was a descriptive literature review. The required data for this literature search was obtained by exploring electronic databases such as ProQuest, Google Scholar, EBSCO, Laurea Finna, and Theseus. The review focused on five specific research articles. An internet search was conducted to find relevant reports and published articles. The qualitative research method was used to analyze the literature.

The findings of the thesis are that refugees living in Finland face employment problems in many ways. Despite the increasing number of these issues, it is evident that racism, social exclusion, and discrimination generally prevail. Research shows that social dynamics and changing agendas significantly affect the lives and employment processes of refugees, with these problems being ongoing and not easily resolvable. This topic calls for further investigation and more comprehensive, effective, and practical research should be conducted. This approach could provide a healthier perspective and understanding of this matter.

Keywords: Refugees, Employment, Employment Problems, Finland

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia niitä työllistymiseen liittyviä ongelmia, joita pakolaiset kohtaavat, kokevat ja joutuvat kohtaamaan Suomessa. Opinnäytetyön teoreettinen viitekehys syventyy pakolaisiin ja heidän prosesseihinsa sekä työllisyyteen liittyviin käsitteisiin ja tilanteisiin.

Tässä opinnäytetyössä käytettiin kuvailevaa kirjallisuuskatsausmenetelmää. Tarvittavat tiedot kirjallisuushakuun saatiin tutkimalla sähköisiä tietokantoja, kuten ProQuest, Google Scholar, EBSCO, Laurea Finna ja Theseus. Katsaus keskittyi viiteen tiettyyn tutkimusartikkeliin. Internet-haku suoritettiin relevanttien raporttien ja julkaistujen artikkeleiden löytämiseksi. Kirjallisuutta analysoitiin laadullisen tutkimusmenetelmän avulla.

Opinnäytetyön tulokset osoittavat, että Suomessa asuvat pakolaiset kohtaavat monenlaisia työllistymiseen liittyviä ongelmia. Vaikka näiden ongelmien määrä on kasvussa, rasismi, sosiaalinen syrjäytyminen ja syrjintä ovat yleisiä. Tutkimukset osoittavat, että sosiaaliset dynamiikat ja muuttuvat agendat vaikuttavat merkittävästi pakolaisten elämään ja työllistymisprosesseihin. Tutkimukset osoittavat, että nämä ongelmat ovat jatkuvia eivätkä ratkea helposti. Tämä aihe vaatii lisätutkimusta, ja laajempaa, tehokkaampaa ja käytännönläheisempää tutkimusta tulisi suorittaa. Tämä lähestymistapa voisi tarjota terveemmän näkökulman ja ymmärryksen tähän aiheeseen.

Asiasanat: Pakolaiset, Työllisyys, Työllistymisongelmat, Suomi

## Contents

1	Introduction .....	6
2	Theoretical Framework.....	7
2.1	REFUGEE.....	7
2.2	Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Immigrant - Central Concepts .....	9
2.3	Path to Refugee in Finland.....	12
2.4	Refugees Statistic and Review in Finland .....	14
2.5	Employment.....	15
2.6	Finnish Employment Policies for Refugees in Finland.....	18
3	Methodology.....	20
3.1	Purpose, Aim and Research Question .....	21
3.2	Descriptive Literature Review.....	21
3.3	Data Collection .....	21
3.4	Data Analysis.....	25
3.5	Ethical Consideration and Reliability.....	29
4	Results .....	30
4.1	Social Exclusion.....	30
4.2	Social Bias .....	31
4.3	Systemic Inequality .....	32
5	Discussion.....	33
6	Conclusion and Reflections .....	34
	Figures .....	42
	Tables .....	42

## 1 Introduction

Migration movements brought about by globalization in the world have increased significantly both in scope and quantity. A remarkable point has also been reached in terms of the number of legal and illegal asylum seekers. Today, it is not possible for many countries, particularly the richest countries, to keep themselves away from this immigration and asylum phenomenon. People depart from their home countries for diverse reasons, seeking migration or refuge in other countries, and the consequences of this phenomenon are inevitable, even if countries may have different intentions. The phenomenon of migration is a social phenomenon that needs to be addressed in many aspects in terms of its causes and consequences. It constitutes an important area of interaction between the administration of the country and the citizens of the country in which they take refuge in other countries, where they must be extremely sensitive, measured, and balanced.

There has been a crisis referred to in the literature as the Arab Spring and whose consequences have profoundly affected the whole world, especially Europe. At the same time, while radical changes were taking place in the Middle East and North African countries, the death of many people and the abandonment of their countries were on the agenda of the whole world (Anderson 2020).

In 2015, the number of migrants reaching or trying to reach Europe caused the biggest migration crisis since World War II to erupt. An unprecedented increase in mobility from the region to Europe has brought 1.2 million migrants and asylum seekers to Europe. In 2015, Finland received 32,476 asylum applications, ten times more than in any of the previous 30 years. With this number, Finland became the country that received the 4th highest number of refugees per capita, after Hungary, Austria, and Sweden, during the mass migration to Europe in 2015. Compared to 2014, the increase in Finland is +822% (European Commission 2016, 44).

In Finland, the government has aligned its policies for both domestic and international migration. The goal is to manage immigration to Europe and direct individuals toward lawful and secure pathways. Furthermore, there is a need for impactful actions in the nations where migrants come from and pass through. Finland actively engages in addressing issues pertaining to migration and the refugee crisis within the framework of the European Union. It is of the opinion that a collaborative approach involving African and Middle Eastern nations, regional stakeholders, and the global community is essential to finding solutions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs assesses the immigration situation from a foreign relations standpoint, recognizing that effectively responding to this challenge demands a holistic strategy, a diverse set of resources, and sustained efforts over an extended period. Numerous areas within the State Department

are interconnected with, and impacted by, the refugee crisis in various ways (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2022).

It is evident that there is an ongoing movement of refugees in both the world and Europe. This reality demands attention. In the globalizing world, conjunctures are changing radically every day. Traumatic situations such as natural disasters, climate crises, and wars are no longer limited to specific regions; they can occur right beside us. Even situations that seem distant and unfamiliar can have an economic impact on our daily lives. In times of such uncertainty, regardless of how well systems and social state's function, challenges are bound to arise. Among these challenges, one significant issue is employment. Refugees, who are among the most affected by the aforementioned situations and have been forced to leave their homelands, experience these employment difficulties both in material and moral terms.

The purpose of this study is to examine the employment problems of refugees in Finland. A descriptive literature review will be conducted, and the data will be analyzed using qualitative research methods. The data will mainly be collected from academic articles and reports. Personal interest was prioritized while selecting the study. This study aims to provide comprehensive information on the employment problems and overall circumstances of refugees, particularly in Finland, which can be beneficial for anyone seeking such information.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter consists of six parts. Firstly, it will explain the universal definition of a refugee, followed by a description of the key concepts required to understand the entire chapter. Subsequently, the processes leading to refugee status in Finland will be explained, along with an examination of refugee statistics and reviews specific to Finland. Following this, the definition of unemployment will be explained both in general terms and from a Finnish perspective. Lastly, it will examine the employment policies that are applied to refugees in Finland.

### 2.1 REFUGEE

The term "refugee" in English, "pakolainen" in Finnish, can be broadly defined as "a person who seeks to escape from unbearable circumstances or individual situations".

As the first effort in this regard, international studies or documents made during the period of the League of Nations between 1922 and 1946 defined the refugee as a "group" or "category" (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam 2007, 15). According to this approach, for a person to benefit from refugee status, it is necessary and sufficient that the person is a) outside the country of origin and b) lacking the protection of the person's country of origin. This approach continued until

the UN era. The transition from the ancient perception of the issue of protecting people who seek asylum in other lands by having to leave their countries to the international perception of asylum in the nation-state order begins with the establishment of the League of Nations (Jaeger 2001, 727). During the 1920s and 1930s, the first international organization dealing with human mobility because of forced migration and providing studies in this context was the League of Nations, which was established after the World War I (UNHCR 2005, 5).

The International Nansen Office, which acted with the awareness that its duty would end in 1938, took action to find a solution to the refugee problem, which was tried to be solved based on events, but which increased with the increasing number of forced migration movements. In August 1931, the Office submitted, through its own Committee of Experts, a draft text to the League of Nations with a proposal to conclude a formal treaty to stabilize the situation of refugees. In the relevant draft text, explanations of the need for a treaty and the necessity of a simple procedure for the creation of this treaty are included. Also included in the text is the desire for this proposal to be the basis for a document that, unlike other regulations, will be designed to be binding on the state's parties. To discuss the draft and to create a safer refugee law arrangement, the League of Nations Council convened with the representatives of fifteen states. The 1933 Refugee Convention can be considered the first step to offer refugees a comprehensive legal framework. The 1933 Refugee Convention, as the initial multilateral international treaty offering international protection for refugees and ensuring their fundamental civil and economic entitlements, stands as the second most significant initiative after the 1926 Slavery Convention in establishing a voluntary framework for upholding human rights (Fitzmaurice 2013, 2).

The impact of World War II on refugee movements within Europe was also acknowledged. In 1943, at the Bermuda Conference, a decision was made to extend the responsibilities of the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee. Initially focused on refugee movements from Germany and Austria, the committee's mandate was expanded to encompass all refugee movements in Europe during World War II (UNHCR 2005, 5).

The definition of refugee in article 1/A-2 of the United Nations Geneva Convention on the legal situation of refugees dated 1951 is as follows: Due to events unfolding within the nation of their citizenship and based on their race, religion, nationality, affiliation with a specific social group, or political beliefs, they are at risk of facing persecution. A person who is outside their home country due to valid fears, lacks the protection of that country, or chooses not to seek that protection due to those fears, is without nationality, and is outside the country they used to live in because of these circumstances, and either cannot return or is unwilling to do so due to those fears, is referred to as a "refugee. "The Convention generally accepted the refugee in equal legal status with the foreigner, without prejudice to the more favorable provisions. In



addition, the Convention regulates that the provisions of the Convention shall be applied to all refugees, regardless of race, religion, or origin (UNHCR 2011, 3-4).

Despite its universal nature, this definition of refugee contains temporal and geographical limitations. Hence, it wasn't until the 1967 amendments that the 1951 Convention genuinely evolved into a valuable universal instrument for protecting refugees (Nasr 2016).

The 1967 Protocol extends the applicability of the 1951 Convention. The 1967 Protocol removes the geographical and time restrictions that were part of the 1951 Convention. These limits initially limited the Convention to persons who had become refugees due to events taking place in Europe before 1 January 1951 (UNHCR 2011, 4).

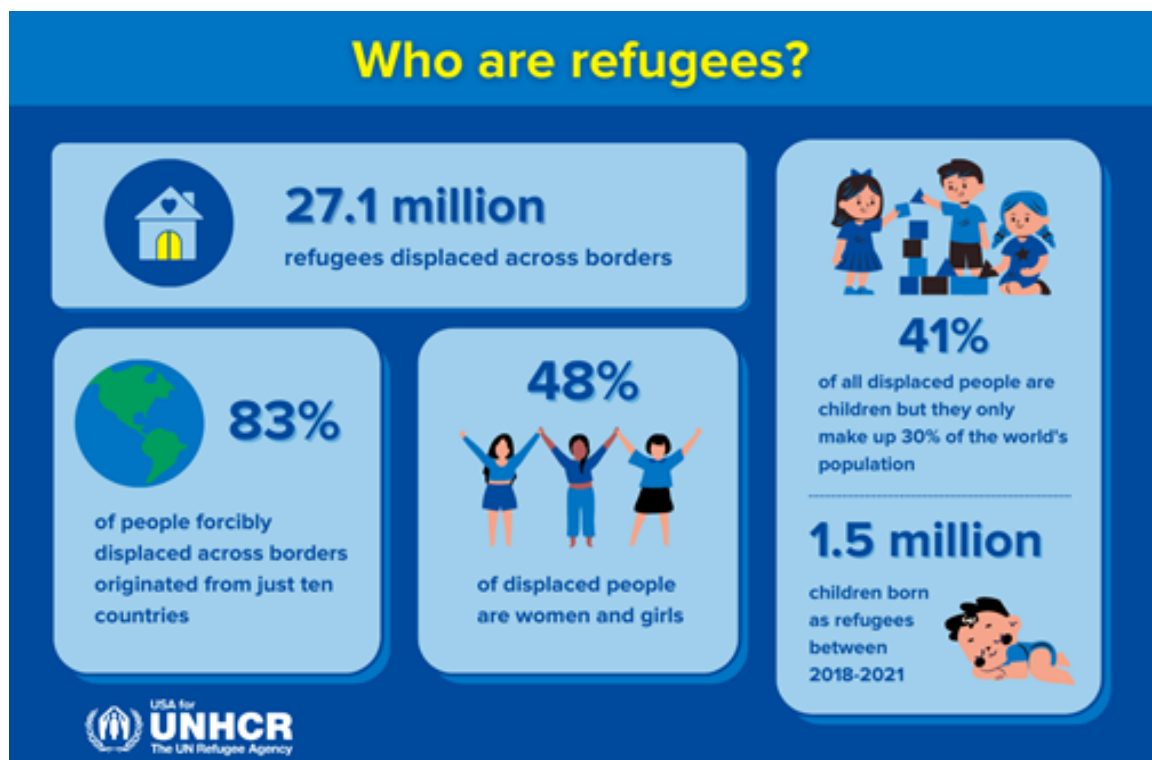


Figure 1: Who are refugees? (UNHCR Global Trends Report 2021)

Illustrated in Figure 1, the refugee numbers and rates provide us with a broader perspective. These numbers are many times higher than the population of many countries. Particularly in the present era, the term "refugee" has become increasingly commonplace, and it appears that its usage will continue to increase in the years ahead.

## 2.2 Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Immigrant - Central Concepts

Every day, the myriad of people, are being displaced from their homes due to various reasons. The term "refugee" refers to a person fleeing war or persecution, while a person who leaves their country for education is simply called an "immigrant". Asylum seekers are also a distinct

group. Such terms can become more and more confusing with each passing day and can be confused with each other or evaluated together. In this chapter, the terms are clarified for a better understanding of the process.

An *asylum seeker* is an individual who has fled their country of origin in search of protection from persecution and severe human rights violations in another country. However, during this process, refugees do not yet have the legal right, and a decision regarding their asylum application is anticipated. As seeking asylum is a basic human right, everyone is entitled to seek asylum in another country (Amnesty International 2023). About one million people seek asylum every year. National asylum systems exist to determine who qualifies for international protection (UNHCR 2022). The important point here is that not every asylum seeker will be considered a refugee eventually, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker (Amnesty International 2019).

A *refugee* is someone who has fled their country of origin because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution. The risks to their safety and their lives are enormous. Therefore, they have no choice but to seek safety outside their country, fearing whether even their own government will be able to protect them from these dangers. Refugees have the right to international protection (Amnesty International 2023).

Refugees are specifically defined and protected in international law. Their situation is often so dangerous that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries and thus become internationally recognized as "refugees" with help from states. To be exact, it is very dangerous for them to return home. It's crucial to remember that denying asylum can have life-threatening consequences for certain individuals. Refugees are individuals who require international protection due to being excluded from their country of origin because of persecution, violence, conflict, or other conditions that severely disrupt public order (UNHCR 2016).

The concept of *immigrants* does not have an internationally accepted legal definition. However, most institutions and organizations describe immigrants as individuals who are outside their home country and are not asylum seekers or refugees. People choose to immigrate for various reasons, such as work, education, or family reunification. On the other hand, some individuals feel compelled to leave their country due to poverty, political instability, gang violence, natural disasters, or other challenging circumstances. Although many people do not meet the legal definition of refugee, they may be in danger if they go home (Amnesty International 2023).

It's crucial to differentiate between immigrants and refugees as each group is dealt with under specific laws and processes by individual governments. Immigration is governed by each country's laws, while refugee protection and asylum norms are defined in both national and

international law. Every country has specific responsibilities towards anyone seeking asylum on their territory or borders, and UNHCR helps countries fulfil their asylum and refugee protection responsibilities. Politics has its own way of intervening in such debates. Connecting refugees and migrants can have serious consequences for the lives and safety of refugees. Blurring the two terms distracts attention from the specific legal protection refugees need. At a time when more refugees than ever need such protection, it could undermine public support for refugees and the institution of asylum (UNHCR 2016).

A *quota refugee* is an individual who has been forced to flee their country of origin and is unable to remain in the country they fled from. These individuals are officially recognized as refugees by the UNHCR (Finnish Immigration Service 2023). Resettlement is a crucial tool to safeguard refugees whose lives, freedoms, safety, health, or fundamental human rights are in danger in their country of asylum. For nearly seventy years, UNHCR has utilized resettlement to offer millions of refugees' protections as well as the chance to establish new lives for themselves and their loved ones. Resettlement is a process that results in a third-country solution for refugees who do not have the option to integrate locally or return to their home country. After determining their eligibility for international protection, UNHCR identifies refugees in accordance with the categories of applicants determined based on their increased protection risks and guides them for resettlement. Resettlement States then decide who to accept. Resettlement can only be achieved through cooperation with various partners, particularly resettlement States, other international organizations, and particularly critical civil society (UNHCR 2020, 1).

Finland is committed to providing international protection to those in need through international agreements such as the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, other international human rights conventions, and EU legislation. In Finland, a person can receive international protection in the form of either refugee status or subsidiary protection status. The Aliens Act outlines the criteria and procedures for granting such protection. To apply for international protection, one must apply for asylum, after which authorities will investigate whether the individual meets the criteria for asylum. If the conditions for obtaining asylum are not met, it will be investigated whether the person is entitled to protection in Finland based on subsidiary protection. *Subsidiary protection* can be obtained if the person is threatened with a real and serious danger other than the persecution on which the asylum was based. The basis may be the death penalty or the threat of torture. The cause may also be serious personal danger from an armed conflict. *Temporary protection* is for persons fleeing the war in Ukraine. The provision of temporary protection makes it possible to provide protection to a limited number of persons in a faster and lighter process than the asylum procedure (Ministry of the Interior 2022).

The EU Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU) states that a person is considered to have received international protection if they have been granted refugee status (either through asylum or as a quota refugee) or have been accepted as a beneficiary of subsidiary protection (Directive 2011/95/EU).

### 2.3 Path to Refugee in Finland

To apply for asylum in Finland, the person must be physically present in the country. Sending a letter or email to the Finnish Immigration Service is not a valid way to apply for asylum. It is also not possible to apply for asylum at a Finnish embassy or consulate located outside of Finland. There is no application form that can be used to apply for asylum in advance. The only way to apply for asylum is to speak to a police or border control officer in Finland (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

If an individual has a justifiable reason to fear persecution in their home country or the country where they reside on a permanent basis, based on factors such as their origin, religion, nationality, affiliation with a particular social group, or political beliefs, they can apply for asylum in Finland. Another requirement is that due to feared persecution, the protection of the authorities of the home country or country of permanent residence cannot be relied upon. The Finnish Immigration Service assesses whether the conditions for applying for asylum are met. Asylum criteria are defined in Finnish laws and international agreements (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

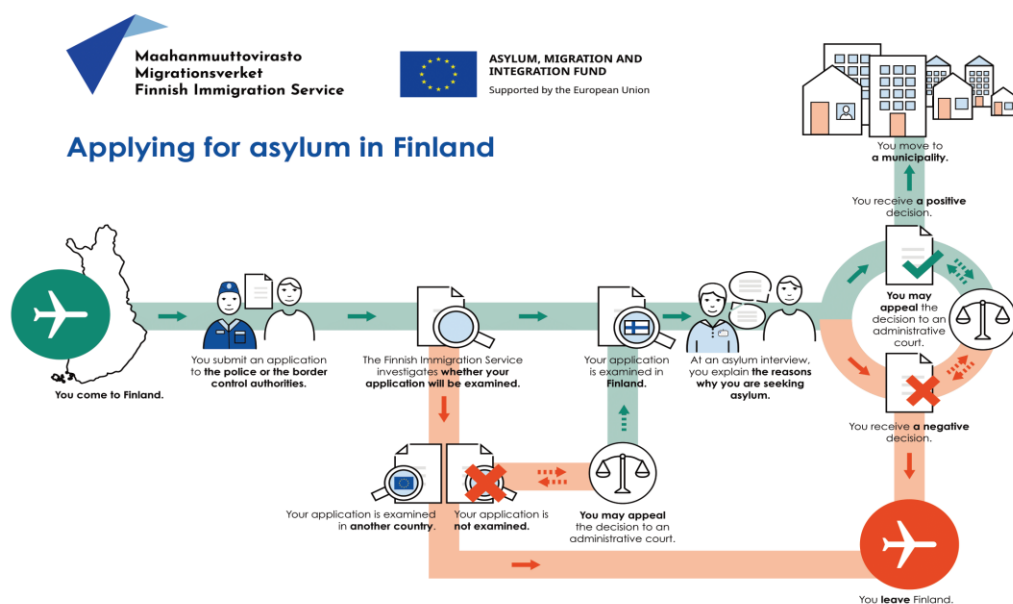


Figure 2: Applying for asylum in Finland (Finnish Immigration Service)

As shown in Figure 2, upon arrival in Finland, it must be said immediately that one wishes to apply for asylum with the border control authorities or the police. A border control officer or a police officer registers the applicant as an asylum seeker. Basic information is entered into the information book and fingerprints, signatures and photographs are taken. These are called biometric identifiers. Other information records are also checked. After the official receives the asylum application, he or she is directed to a reception center (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

If an asylum application has been applied in Finland, they are placed in a reception center. Accommodation depends on age, gender, and other circumstances. In addition, accommodation is organized in a way that allows family members to live together in the same place if they wish. Persons under the age of 18 who come to Finland without a guardian are housed in a group home or supported housing unit. The first place where asylum seekers usually stay is called the transit center. The transit centers are located near the service points of the Finnish Immigration Service that handles asylum interviews. These centers are primarily for new asylum seekers who have just arrived in Finland. After an asylum seeker goes through an asylum interview, they will be transferred to another reception center to await a decision (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

Once the Finnish Immigration Service has decided regarding the asylum application, the Finnish Immigration Service or the police gives inform asylum seekers about it. The decision is communicated to the asylum seeker in their mother tongue or in another language they understand. If necessary, an interpreter or translator assists when presenting the decision. If a positive decision on the application has been made, one of the following is getting; asylum or refugee status, subsidiary protection and a residence permit on other grounds. Asylum means granted refugee status. Asylum is granted for four years. If a negative decision has been made on the application, there is the right to appeal the decision at the Administrative Court. If the decision is not appealed, there is no right to stay in Finland, and it is necessary to leave the country (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

As per the guidelines set by the UNHCR, individuals who are identified as refugees and recommended for resettlement in Finland can be admitted as quota refugees. The UNHCR assesses the level of assistance required by the refugees and suggests those who are in dire need of resettlement in Finland as a part of the refugee quota. Finland does not request UNHCR to recommend pre-identified persons like parents or siblings as quota refugees. UNHCR decides which people need help most and who recommends resettling in Finland. In recent years, part of the refugee quota has been reserved for refugees whom UNHCR estimates need urgent resettlement. Finland selects these emergency cases without consultation, based on UNHCR documents. Quota refugees do not live in reception centers. Instead, they move directly to

Finnish municipalities. To come to Finland as a quota refugee, they must first be accepted by a municipality and provided with a place to live (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

The Centers for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment (ELY Centers) are responsible for directing quota refugees to municipalities. Each ELY Center negotiates with municipalities in its area and agrees on how many refugees to resettle in each municipality. The state pays compensation to municipalities for accepting quota refugees and providing integration services (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

#### 2.4 Refugees Statistic and Review in Finland

There are more than 100 million people in the world who have left their homes. The vast majority flees within their own country. Most of those who cross state borders flee to neighbouring countries. Only a fraction of the world's refugees, 0.04%, come to Finland (Suomen Pakolaisapu n.d.).

According to the Statistic Finland (2023), the number of people of foreign origin in Finland has increased steadily over the past two decades. In 2022, a total of 508,173 people of foreign origin lived in Finland. 83% of them were born abroad and 17% were born in Finland (Statistic Finland 2023).

Refugees arrive in Finland through quotas or seeking asylum. Finland's experience with refugees is relatively recent globally. In 1973, the first refugees arrived from Chile, followed by approximately 500 Vietnamese refugees in the late 1970s. However, most Finns became familiar with refugee status only with the arrival of the first large groups of Somali refugees in the early 1990s (Suomen Pakolaisapu n.d.).

Table 1: Asylum applications and quota refugee statistics from 2018 to 2022 (Finnish Immigration Service 2023)

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Asylum Application to Finland.</b>	4548	4550	3209	2545	5827
<b>Positive Decision (Asylum granted)</b>	1852	2073	1500	1752	1367
<b>Positive Decision (Subsidiary protection and others)</b>	888	886	566	380	393
<b>Negative Decision</b>	1976	2875	1196	893	878
<b>Quota Refugees Status</b>	750	750	850	1050	1500

As shown in Table 1, a total of 2545 people applied for asylum in the year 2021. Most refugees who applied for asylum in 2021 were from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia. Of all the asylum seekers, 70% were male and 30% were female. Almost half of the applicants were young adults aged between 18 and 34, while approximately a quarter were children and teenagers aged 0-17. In 2015, Finland saw the arrival of 32,476 asylum seekers, which was the highest number of asylum seekers ever recorded. However, the number of asylum applications dropped considerably in the following years and has been a few thousand per year since then (Migri Statistic 2022). The numbers have stabilized since 2015, but the war in Ukraine has increased the number of applicants for international protection, and this increase is also reflected in the 2022 data (Ministry of the Interior 2022). In the years 2020-2021, Finland committed to receiving 175 asylum seekers through internal transfers within the European Union (Finnish Immigration Service 2022).

Finland accepts refugees directly from refugee camps through its resettlement system. Quota refugees are people nominated by the UN refugee agency UNHCR to be resettled in safer countries. Quota refugees often include particularly vulnerable people, such as children, persons with disabilities, and victims of violence and torture. Finland has received quota refugees since the 1970s. The annual size of the refugee quota is decided by the Parliament. Finland's annual refugee quota was 750 for a long time, starting in 2001. Currently, Finland is committed to accepting a quota of 1,050 refugees per year. Due to the crisis in Afghanistan, the government decided to increase the 2022 refugee quota to 1,500 people (Ministry of the Interior 2022). According to the Finnish Immigration System, in 2023 the number of quota refugees will be 1050 (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

Another important one in Finland's international protection types is temporary protection. Temporary protection was used specifically for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. This way of protection makes it possible to provide protection to a limited group of people in a much lighter and faster process than the normal asylum procedure (Ministry of the Interior 2023). According to the Finnish Immigration System, as of September 4, 2023, a total of 63119 temporary protection applications were received. 61904 of them were applied by Ukrainian citizens. 1215 of them were applied by nationals of other countries (Finnish Immigration Service 2023).

## 2.5 Employment

According to the International Labour Organization (2023), employment is the legal link between employers and employees. It occurs when a person performs a job or service under certain conditions in return for remuneration (International Labour Organization 2023). There are parties to the employment relationship, which is defined as the employment contract (or service contract) between the employer and the employee. *Employee* is just one of the legal definitions of a 'worker' (Eurofound 2017). Irrespective of its definition, the connection between

the worker and the employer establishes shared rights and responsibilities within the employment relationship (International Labour Organization 2023).

Throughout history, people have migrated for a variety of reasons. Migration has been driven by factors such as natural disasters, wars, associated scarcity of resources, hunger, famine, and poverty. Economic challenges are emerging as key concerns for migrants in their destination locations. Among these economic challenges, the matter of employment holds the highest significance for immigrants.

Migration is a prevalent aspect of both social and economic life in numerous countries. The migrant population profile varies considerably, partly due to the diversity of migration sources. For instance, in much of Europe, citizens can benefit from extensive freedom of movement rights. Labour migration plays an important role in numerous countries. Other sources include family and human migration. Whatever the source, migration has significant effects on our societies, and these can be controversial. The economic impact of migration is not an exception (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2014, 1).

The world grapples with its most significant refugee crisis since World War II, as millions are uprooted due to conflict and persecution, driving them from their homelands. While developed economies often hesitate to embrace refugees, both cultural and economic concerns play a role. Refugees embody consumers, workers, investors, entrepreneurs, taxpayers, and innovators, together fostering job creation, elevating local workforce productivity and wages, enhancing capital returns, driving international trade and investment, and catalyzing innovation, business expansion, and economic growth. On a global scale, relocating individuals to more technologically advanced, politically stable, and secure nations open avenues for amplified economic prospects and worldwide output. Embracing refugees, although demanding initial public funding, holds promise. They undertake tasks shunned by locals in swiftly growing employment sectors within developed economies. Highly skilled refugees, and their similarly accomplished offspring, yield a "mastery dividend," leveraging their diverse skills to address labour market voids. Entrepreneurial refugees breathe life into novel enterprises, yielding prosperity, local job opportunities, dynamic economies, augmented adaptability, and heightened global trade and investment—an impactful "dynamism dividend." These displaced individuals and their descendants infuse fresh perspectives and experiences, fueling novel ideas and technologies. Cultural transitions often spur heightened creativity, with research showcasing diverse groups excelling in problem-solving over like-minded experts. Remarkably young, averaging in their early twenties, refugees also confer a demographic dividend. They even offer a debt dividend. Research by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) consistently highlights immigrants' positive net fiscal contributions. Invaluable developmental dividends are also yielded, benefiting refugees, their offspring, and



their nations of origin. Nonetheless, refugees' economic contributions hinge on their attributes and the receiving country's policies and institutions (Legrain 2016, 7-8).

Employment is widely recognized as a pivotal gauge of immigrant integration. The process of entering the job market carries significant importance for individuals relocating to Finland, as well as for Finnish society and local communities. Gaining and maintaining employment not only allows immigrants to generate income and stabilize their financial situation but also facilitates their integration into the community and their new homeland. This involves learning the language, understanding cultural practices, grasping the functioning of municipalities and Finnish society, and building social relationships and networks. The outcomes in the labour market directly affect the amount of taxes paid by immigrants arriving in Finland and their reliance on social assistance. Therefore, their integration into the labour market constitutes a crucial aspect of the impact of international migration on the public economy, both at the national and local levels (Saukkonen 2017).

### Employment and unemployment rates and their forecasts

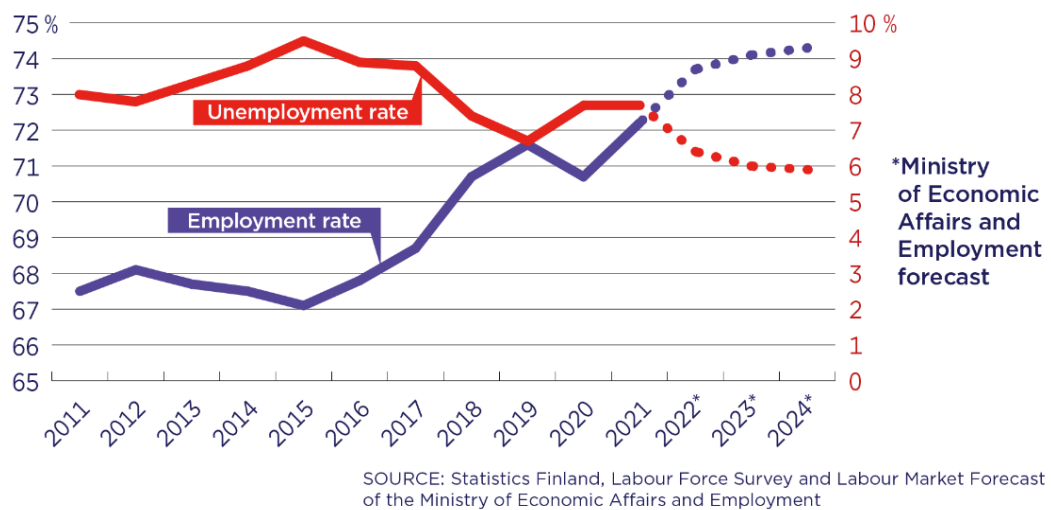


Figure 3: Employment and Unemployment Rates and Their Forecasts (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2022)

As shown in Figure 3, according to the labour market forecast stretched to 2024, employment is improving in Finland. The improvement in the number of working people maintains a growth trajectory, but after the rapid corona recovery phase, employment growth will start to slow down by the end of 2023. According to the estimation, an increasing labour force rate is foreseen every year. In addition to the good economy, the increase in part-time work encourages an increase in the labour share. However, depopulation limits the amount of labour. Employment rates are expected to increase in the same way. Long-term unemployment is projected to fall clearly faster than the autumn 2021 forecast. The number of unemployed

people seeking employment in TE services will continue to decline steadily over the next few years. By 2024, the decline in youth unemployment is projected to reach historically low figures, lower than ever since the recession of the 90s. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2022).

## 2.6 Finnish Employment Policies for Refugees in Finland

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the employment processes of refugees in Finland, it is essential to familiarize oneself with the role and function of the TE Office. This chapter will provide details about the TE Office and other relevant institutions.

The Employment and Economic Development Office, more commonly known as the TE Office, is a government authority that organizes and produces employment and economic services. It provides a versatile service to job seekers, employers, and entrepreneurs by promoting rapid employment of job seekers, improving the availability of skilled labour and securing working conditions for companies. Finland employs a total of about 3,000 professionals in their field and has 15 regional TE offices. They also cooperate extensively with regional and national operators and partners (TE Office 2023).

The TE Office, specifically for job seekers, plays a multifaceted role. It not only aids individuals in discovering and presenting job opportunities but also extends its support by offering job search guidance and coaching. Additionally, it provides valuable information regarding educational choices, vocational fields, and the financing of studies to help job seekers make informed decisions about their career paths. Job seekers have the opportunity to participate in confidential counselling sessions with psychologists who provide assistance in matters related to career choice and career planning. Career coaching is offered so that job seekers can better understand their career choices and career options. In addition to providing services, employment policy prerequisites are reviewed for clients to receive unemployment benefits, and employment policy statements are issued to benefit payers (TE Office 2023).

TE Office for Employers and Entrepreneurs understands the specific needs of businesses, labor markets, and job seekers to facilitate productive connections. Employers are offered tailored solutions and support on recruitment issues, recruiting and training new personnel, salary costs and staff reduction and replacement. Assistance in finding a suitable workforce elsewhere in Europe. Support and consultancy are provided to entrepreneurs who set up companies. Start-up entrepreneurs receive training and information on entrepreneurship-related issues from the TE Office. Assistance is offered with income-related matters such as starting allowance and applying for unemployment insurance. It is part of a regional business services network, which means entrepreneurs gain access to extensive expertise in entrepreneurial issues across the domain (TE Office 2023).

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is responsible for immigration integration policy as well as many policies. Across Finland, the ministry leads direct and supervises the customer-oriented and effective implementation of TE services. A new reform will come in 2024 and TE services will be transferred to municipalities. This reform is aimed at creating a service structure that promotes rapid employment of employees in the best possible way and increases the productivity, availability, efficiency, and versatility of business and business services. They promote employment more effectively when employment services, municipal education services, and job services are the responsibility of the same regulator. When they are produced as local services of municipalities, the customer focus on the services increases (The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2022).

When moving to Finland, assistance with integration and employment is available from TE services. Coming to Finland as an immigrant, it is important to be integrated, that is, to acquire the knowledge and skills needed in Finnish society. Various integration services are available to help integrate it. Family members moving with the incoming person may also be entitled to benefit from integration services. Also, starting to learn Finnish or Swedish is helpful in helping with language skills integration. Help is also available from TE services when help is needed to search for a job. There is a wide range of services available to support employment where the right service can be found (JobMarket Finland 2023).

Integration training is structured as workforce training, focusing on the acquisition of the Finnish language and familiarization with Finnish society and its working life. If you want to be integrated into Finnish, you will first be taken to the Finnish beginner assessment. What kind of training or other service you need will be assessed. Integration training is primarily aimed at customers with an integration plan. The waiting time for integration training, which is organized as workforce training, from the testing of language skills to the start of the training is approximately 1-2 months. The waiting time varies individually according to the situations of the persons. The invitation to the training is sent at least 2-4 weeks before the start of the training (TE Office 2023).

First, preliminary research and an integration plan are made with the experts of the TE office. In the first survey, a preliminary assessment is made of what types of services can be used to best support integration and employment. It may include the initial questionnaire, initial interview, language proficiency test, and proficiency mapping. In addition, an integration plan will be made with the expert. Measures are adopted aimed at promoting opportunities to acquire adequate Finnish or Swedish language skills and other knowledge and skills needed in society and at work and to improve opportunities to participate as an equal member of society (JobMarket Finland 2023).

The service maps already existing competence accumulated in work or education and suitability for a certain field. The mapping gives you a certificate that you can use when looking for a job or when applying for a place to study. Surveys are organized in four different areas which include social services and health care, the field of construction and building technology, the restaurant and catering industry, and the field of mechanical and production technology (TE Office 2023).

Municipality employment trials: Uusimaa's TE office plays an important role in the municipal employment experiment as a provider of sustainable growth, work, and skills. Operating as a specialized and proficient labor intermediary within the job market, the primary mission of the Uusimaa TE Office is to expedite the placement of clients into jobs and enhance the labor market conditions. Municipal recruitment trials began on March 1, 2021 and will end on December 31, 2024 (TE Office 2023).

The questions of immigrants and asylum seekers about their higher education are solved especially in universities responsible for immigration (SIMHE), whose work is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The aim is to facilitate the identification and recognition of highly educated immigrants of different statuses and foreign backgrounds, as well as their orientation to higher education, completion of a degree, and national and regional employment in the Finnish labour market. It is to ensure that the previous studies and degrees of highly educated immigrants coming to Finland are identified and recognized according to national practice as soon as possible so that people can find the right education and career paths (Finnish National Agency for Education 2023).

In personal SIMHE career guidance, a career coach assists in identifying educational and career paths that suit your needs and aspirations in Finland. SIMHE career guidance service is aimed at currently employed, unemployed, or on family leave immigrants in Finland from abroad or who have a university degree in Finland or are interested in studying at a university in Finland (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2020).

### 3 Methodology

In this chapter, I will outline the methodological approaches employed in my thesis and provide the rationale behind their selection. Additionally, I will introduce the objectives, scope, and research questions of my thesis. Furthermore, data collection, including inclusion and exclusion criteria, and content analysis will be explained. Lastly, I will address ethical considerations and discuss the measures taken to ensure the reliability of the research findings.

### 3.1 Purpose, Aim and Research Question

The purpose of this thesis is to reflect on the problems and processes of refugees living in Finland on the way to employment. There is such a phenomenon as the refugee crisis that is increasing daily. In this process, Finland receives many refugees, and every refugee has an employment and integration process.

The aim of this thesis is to find out and understand what problems the refugees living in Finland have on their way to employment. With the literature study, more information will be gained about the problems experienced on the way to employment.

The research question:

- What are the problems faced by refugees living in Finland on the way to employment?

### 3.2 Descriptive Literature Review

I chose for the descriptive literature review method as it offers the most effective means to comprehensively depict and explain the specific topic of my thesis.

The literature review is an important point of the thesis because its purpose is to try to provide the background and rationale of the research carried out. The purpose of the literature review is briefly; to educate oneself in the subject area and to understand the literature before shaping an argument or justification (Danson & Arshad 2014, 37). Descriptive literature reviews primarily summarize individual articles/studies and provide details of research methods and results of cited studies (Jaidka et al. 2013, 304).

The main purpose of a descriptive review is to identify patterns or trends in a body of knowledge related to a research topic and compare them to existing theories, methodologies, and findings. To ensure the generalizability of results, a descriptive review usually involves a systematic search for relevant articles in a field under study and codes each selected article according to specific research characteristics such as publication time, research methodology, main approach, grounded theory, and symbolic research results are like positive, negative, or non-significant. Frequency analysis including derivatives of trend analysis and cluster analysis treats a single study as a single data record and identifies different patterns among the articles reviewed. In doing so, a descriptive review may claim that its findings represent the reality or state of a research field (King & He 2005).

### 3.3 Data Collection

The literature search process was carried out through various electronic databases. These databases are ProQuest, Google Scholar, EBSCO, Laurea Finna, and Theusis.

A lot of research was done before the real inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 2) were added. Especially making these inclusion and exclusion criteria helped a lot in limiting the research. While considering these criteria, studies made especially in the last 5 years were included. Studies other than English were excluded.

The studies were evaluated based on their relevance to the research question at hand. Only full texts were included in this assessment, with a focus on data derived from published articles, journals, and freely available research reports. This approach ensured a comprehensive analysis while concentrating on easily accessible online sources.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Published between the years 2018 - 2023	Publications before 2018
Studies in English	Studies not in English
Studies related to the research question	Studies not related to the research question
Studies are available in full text	Studies are not available in full text
Free and online studies	Charged studies

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied when obtaining the search results. Results from ProQuest and Google Scholar are much more in contrast to the EBSCO, Laurea Finna, and Theseus databases. It has been tried to benefit from all databases for source selection (See Table 3).

Search results of the ProQuest database included the term "Employment Problems of Refugees in Finland". 24 358 results were reached with the initial search results. After that, an advanced search using the phrases "Unemployment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 14 797 publications. Afterwards, an advanced search using the phrases "Employment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 289 publications. Of these 289 potentially found articles, 1 has been downloaded for closer reading and review.

Search results of the Google Scholar database included the term "Employment Problems of Refugees in Finland". 17.500 results were reached with the initial search results. After that, an advanced search using the phrases "Unemployment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 11 500 publications. Afterwards, an advanced search using the phrases "Employment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 67 publications. Of these 67 potentially found articles, 1 have been downloaded for closer reading and review.

Search results of the EBSCO database included the term "Employment Problems of Refugees in Finland". 2406 results were reached with the initial search results. After that, an advanced search using the phrases "Unemployment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 1371 publications. Afterwards, an advanced search using the phrases "Employment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 9 publications. Of these 9 potentially found articles, 1 have been downloaded for closer reading and review.

Search results of the Laurea Finna database included the term "Employment Problems of Refugees in Finland". 1400 results were reached with the initial search results. After that, an advanced search using the phrases "Unemployment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 1321 publications. Afterwards, an advanced search using the phrases "Employment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 8 publications. Of these 8 potentially found articles, 2 have been downloaded for closer reading and review.

Search results of the Theseus database included the term "Employment Problems of Refugees in Finland". 386 results were reached with the initial search results. After that, an advanced search using the phrases "Unemployment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 228 publications. Afterwards, an advanced search using the phrases "Employment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland" resulted in 4 publications. However, after a screening review, it was decided that none of the studies was eligible.

Table 3: Search Criteria and Results

Database	"Employment Problems of Refugees in Finland"	"Unemployment " AND "Refugees" AND "Finland"	"Employment Problems" AND "Refugees" AND "Finland"	"Employment Problems of Refugees" AND "Finland"
ProQuest	24 358	14 797	289	0
Google Scholar	17 500	11 500	67	0
EBSCO	2406	1371	9	0
Laurea Finna	1400	1321	8	0
Theseus	386	228	4	0

Consequently, as a result of this comprehensive database search, a total of five articles were meticulously chosen for detailed review and analysis. In Table 4 below, you will find a comprehensive presentation of these selected articles, complete with detailed information.

Table 4: Introducing the Chosen Data

Data	Purpose of the study	Method
Ahmad, A. 2022. Does Additional Work Experience Moderate Ethnic Discrimination in the Labour Market? <i>Economic and Industrial Democracy</i> , 43(3), 1119-1142.	To test whether greater work experience lowers discrimination against job applicants of immigrant origin in the Finnish labour market.	The study method used in this research article is a correspondence test, which is a type of field experiment.
Airila, A., Väänänen, A., Toivanen, M., Koskinen, A., Skogberg, N., & Castaneda, A. 2021. Are Self-rated Health, Native Finnish Friends and Having Children under School Age Associated with Employment? <i>Kurdish and Somali Migrants in Finland. Finnish Yearbook of Population Research</i> , 55, 25-44.	The study aims to investigate the relationship between self-rated health, having Finnish friends, having young children, and employment among Somali and Kurdish immigrants in Finland, and whether these factors differ by gender and origin.	The article uses cross-sectional data from structured face-to-face interviews with Kurdish and Somali migrants in Finland.
Alho, R. 2021. Finland: Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in a Tightened Policy Framework. In B. Galgóczi (Ed.), <i>Betwixt and Between: Integrating Refugees Into the EU Labour Market</i> (pp. 83-107). European Trade Union Institute.	To analyze what Finland faces in integrating asylum seekers and refugees into society in the context of a tightened policy framework.	The article primarily employs a qualitative research method, using a case study approach to examine the integration policies and practices in Finland.
Masoud, A., Holm, G., & Brunila, K. 2021. <i>Becoming Integrateable: Hidden Realities of Integration Policies and Training in</i>	To examine integration policies and training programs for immigrants and refugees in Finland and highlight their limitations.	The article uses a discursive approach and conducts ethnographic research, including interviews and observations.



Finland. <i>International Journal of Inclusive Education</i> , 25(1), 52-65.		
Tervola, J. 2020. Different Selection Processes, Different Outcomes? Comparing Labour Market Integration of Asylum Seekers, Resettled Refugees and Their Reunited Family Members in Finland. <i>Comparative migration studies</i> , 8(1), 1-24.	The article compares the labour market integration of three groups of refugees in Finland and explores whether the differences in their selection processes affect their employment outcomes. Its purpose is to provide insights into the effectiveness of refugee selection and integration policies.	The article uses quantitative analysis based on regression models, which are applied to survey data from the Finnish Labour Force Survey.

Table 4 shows five articles taken from databases. The table presents the authors' names, publication year, article titles, a concise summary of their contents, and the research methods employed in the publications.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

In my thesis, I have chosen to use the content analysis method for analysis method. In this chapter, I will explain what this method involves and outline each step of the process.

The descriptive literature review method involves a thorough and organized analysis of pertinent studies and reports published on a specific research topic (Hart 2018, 8; Cooper 2017, 4). The primary aim of the data analysis is to offer a comprehensive understanding of the existing knowledge about the topic and to identify essential themes, trends, and areas where there are gaps in the literature (Fink 2019, 2). To conduct the data analysis, the researcher searches for and collects all relevant literature on the topic of interest from various sources, such as academic databases, journals, and other publications (Baumeister & Leary 1997, 312). The collected literature is then systematically analyzed to extract key findings, information, and insights related to the topic (Torraco 2016, 405).

Five distinct databases were used while writing this thesis. A meticulous process of inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied during the publication selection phase. Through an exhaustive search, relevant publications were carefully chosen, followed by a comprehensive and thorough analysis.

The analysis typically involves categorizing and synthesizing the literature based on specific research questions or objectives (Hart 2018, 10). It may also involve evaluating the quality and rigour of the studies included in the review, using established criteria for assessing the reliability and validity of research studies (Cooper 2017, 22). The data analysis in a descriptive literature review is typically qualitative in nature, focusing on identifying key themes and patterns in the literature rather than statistical analysis (Fink 2019, 14). The data analysis may also include a discussion of any limitations of the reviewed studies and suggestions for future research directions (Hart 2018, 25).

In assessing the purpose of the chosen studies, careful consideration was given to the extent to which the thesis addressed the research question.

In general, the data analysis conducted using the descriptive literature review method furnishes a thorough and detailed account of the current state of research on a given subject, emphasizing noteworthy discoveries and perspectives while pinpointing areas where the present understanding may be lacking (Torraco 2016, 409).

In this research, content analysis with themes has been employed as the method of data analysis. Content analysis is a straightforward form of data processing commonly used for summarizing and synthesizing data from descriptive literature reviews (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, 1279). Adopting an inductive approach to content analysis, this qualitative study involves developing concepts and recognizing themes through the examination of data, articles, and research material (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 109).

After conducting a comprehensive review of the selected articles, an analysis was performed by identifying frequently occurring units of words or phrases in the written responses provided by the participants (Kondracki et al. 2002, 81). These units were then categorized into themes, based on their underlying meaning and significance, to draw meaningful insights from the data (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, 1285).

For the purpose of this study, content analysis will serve as the primary analysis method. Specifically, Tuomi and Sarajärvi's (2018) reference will be used to guide the content analysis. It is important to note that content analysis can refer to various approaches. While it can be utilized to analyze qualitative studies, such as interviews, it can also be considered a distinct method. When utilized as an independent method, content analysis can be conducted in a systematic and objective manner. It is particularly effective in analyzing unstructured sources of data. The process of content analysis involves collecting data and summarizing it in a general form. One criticism of content analysis is that it can be perceived as an incomplete method of analysis because the results are based on the researcher's interpretation of the data. Although the analysis phase may be detailed, the researcher may not be able to draw the desired conclusions, thereby presenting the analysis as the result. Content analysis is sometimes used

interchangeably with content breakdown, but the two methods differ in that content analysis involves breaking down the data in a verbal manner, while content breakdown utilizes a more numerical and quantitative approach. The content analysis method can be broken down into three parts: simplifying, clustering, and abstraction (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). In the following figure, instances of the simplification, clustering, and abstraction stages will be presented.

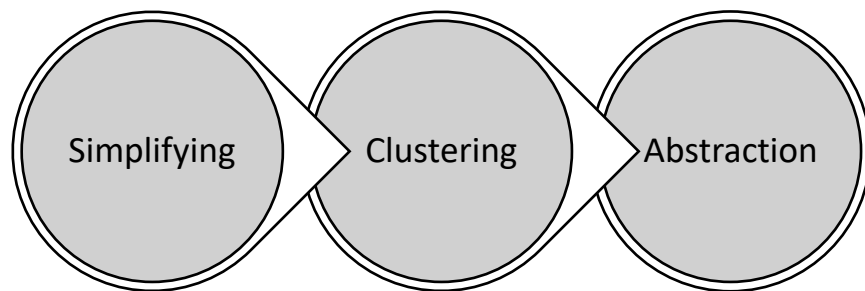


Figure 4: Content Analysis Process (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018)

To begin with, the data will be deconstructed and simplified, with any extraneous information removed. This may involve dividing the text into distinct sections and using colour coding to differentiate between data that fall under different categories. Following the colour-coding process, all non-essential components will be simplified. This process of simplification or reduction involves removing any superfluous information, to emphasize only those aspects of the data that are relevant to the research question:

Table 5: Simplifying the Data

Original Phrase	Simplified Phrase
<p>“The existence of this type of racism in recruitment makes it obviously more difficult for asylum seekers and refugees to find jobs. If employers, in line with these studies, seem to prefer hiring women instead of men, many asylum seekers who arrived since 2015 may find themselves the victim of double discrimination given that the large majority are male (Alho 2021).”</p>	<p>Racist recruitment practices and gender preferences by employers create significant challenges for refugees in finding employment.</p>

<p>“When refugees and immigrants are unemployed, they are not perceived as individuals. They have the dual disadvantage of being the other, and unemployed (Schmauch 2011). This dual disadvantage shifts the focus solely towards their ability to get into integration training or work practice and most importantly, to find a job, any job. (Masoud 2021).”</p>	<p>Unemployed refugees face the challenge of being seen as anonymous entities, grappling with both marginalization and joblessness.</p>
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Once the process of breaking down and simplifying the data is completed, the subsequent step is clustering. Clustering is the second phase of the content analysis method, whereby the researcher groups the previously simplified and broken-down data into unified groups under a subclassification. During the clustering phase, the researcher reads and understands the data, and collects all the matching simplified components together to develop a subclassification system.

The aim of clustering is to identify concepts that share similarities or contrasts in the data and categorize them into different groups and subcategories, thereby providing an initial outline of the research topic (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018).

Table 6: Clustering the Data

Simplified	Clustering	Subcategory
<p>Racist hiring practices and gender biases by employers pose major obstacles for refugees in their job search.</p>	Racist hiring practices.	Racism
	Gender biases.	Sexism
	Major obstacles.	
<p>Unemployed refugees are often perceived as anonymous individuals, facing the dual struggle of marginalization and joblessness.</p>	Perceived as anonymous individuals.	Marginalization
	Unemployed refugees.	Discrimination
	Dual struggle.	

The final stage of the content analysis method is the abstraction phase.

Table 7: Abstraction of Data

Subcategory	Linking Category
Racism	Social Exclusion
Sexism	Social Bias
Marginalization	Systemic Inequality
Discrimination	

During this stage, the researcher further subdivides the subclassifications into a main heading or theoretical concept. It is essential to continue with the abstraction process while ensuring that the primary data view remains clear. This abstraction process separates and conceptualizes the main information gathered from the research, resulting in the creation of theoretical concepts. The final output of the content analysis method is a set of meaningful and relevant conclusions that can be used to answer research questions and support decision-making processes (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018).

After conducting various analyses, three primary categories were identified: social exclusion, social bias, and systemic inequality.

### 3.5 Ethical Consideration and Reliability

In this chapter, the ethical considerations and reliability of the study will be examination.

The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK), appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, has collaborated with the Finnish research community to develop guidelines for the responsible conduct of research and the handling of alleged violations of conduct (RCR guidelines). These guidelines aim to promote responsible research practices, known as 'Finnish hyvä tieteellinen käytäntö,' while ensuring that any alleged violations are addressed competently, fairly, and with a clear purpose (TENK 2023).

Ethical review means the advanced examination and evaluation of a research plan considering the ethical practices generally followed in the discipline in question, with particular attention to the prevention of any harm that the research or its results may cause to the research subject (TENK 2021).

The European Commission (2020) has published a guidance note on conducting ethical research involving refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. In the guidance note, they recognize the extra common vulnerability and principles of how to do such research with ethics. The

principles include demonstrating care and sensitivity when working with the group, maintaining objectivity and transparency, respecting individuals' ethnicity, language, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, being extra cautious when identifying participants, and respecting their values and decisions (European Commission 2020). Because this thesis is studying and analyzing already existing research, this should have been done already, but this thesis will still follow the ethical guidelines on how to do ethical research on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. This approach has been taken to ensure that the language used is sensitive to the topic.

The thesis writing process involved an extensive search for relevant research resources, consisting primarily of professional literature such as academic articles and reports. Adhering to ethical academic standards, the thesis carefully avoids plagiarism and provides proper attribution to all sources. The language used throughout the thesis is both accurate and reliable, reflecting a solid command of the subject matter. The information presented is gathered through honest and impartial means, with personal opinions and experiences omitted except when used as supportive evidence.

## 4 Results

In this chapter, I will present my research findings, which are based on the research questions I initially set. Through analysis, I ended up with three linking categories namely social exclusion, social bias, and systemic inequality. I have categorized them into three parts, based on my research questions and findings from the articles.

### 4.1 Social Exclusion

The academic study conducted by Masoud, Holm and Brunila (2021, 62) offers valuable insights into refugees' integration and employment processes. The article discusses the concept of governmentality and its impact on refugees and immigrants' subjectification through an exclusionary inclusion process. This phenomenon refers to the condition where they are considered included while in integration training and work practice, despite facing challenges in finding suitable employment due to educational programs that may not align with their previous experiences. Consequently, refugees and immigrants encounter power relations that label them as unemployable and not yet fully integrated, shaping them to conform to specific mechanisms to become integrateable subjects. When unemployed, they face a dual disadvantage of being perceived as both the "other" and unemployed, shifting the focus solely towards their ability to secure any job, disregarding their individual potential (Masoud et al. 2021, 62).

Integration measures, which are designed to promote social cohesion, tend to label certain individuals as problematic and at risk of being excluded. This often leads to simplified, binary

approaches where differences trigger the need for integration measures, exclusion prompts efforts at inclusion, and unemployment is met with efforts to provide the necessary skills for employment. These integration practices hinder the realization of democratic and equal policies, leaving unemployed refugees and immigrants, or those who do not find suitable programs or jobs after integration training, as disintegrated individuals. Integration becomes a promising but ambiguous project, as the criteria for being well-integrated remain uncertain. Although integration training provides a space for inclusion, it places the responsibility on individuals to free themselves from dependency on such programs and welfare benefits, primarily through finding employment (Masoud et al. 2021, 62).

In Finland, labour markets are governed by collective labour agreements, and thus, there is no nationally mandated minimum wage. Instead, these wages are negotiated separately by various trade unions. While collective bargaining has contributed to a high degree of job security, it has also resulted in labour markets that can be less adaptable, potentially creating obstacles for the employment of immigrants with lower levels of human capital compared to native-born individuals. Discrimination based on factors like nationality or gender is prohibited by law, and these attributes should ideally play no role in procedures such as wage determination and recruitment. However, studies examining job applications have observed instances of discrimination against specific ethnicities, highlighting the persistence of discriminatory practices in some cases (Tervola 2020, 8).

#### 4.2 Social Bias

The situation in Nordic countries is intricate, immigration has evolved into a divisive and controversial topic, leading to a rise in support for anti-immigration parties. In 2015, Finland witnessed the emergence of the 'Close the Borders' (Rajat kiinni) movement, which brought together anti-immigrant activists from all over the country for local rallies. These gatherings frequently triggered subsequent counterdemonstrations by anti-racist activists (Alho 2021, 87).

In research conducted by Alho (2021, 96), various obstacles to integration were identified. These included inadequate proficiency in the Finnish or Swedish language, insufficient professional skills, and the existence of racism. The study highlighted the significance of tackling racism and bias to ensure fair chances for those striving to integrate. Furthermore, due to the limited government support, the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society efforts becomes vital in aiding the integration of asylum seekers (Alho 2021, 96).

Other studies conducted in Finland have also revealed the presence of structural racism, where employers exhibit a preference for Finnish or "Western" job applicants. This form of racism in recruitment creates significant challenges for asylum seekers and refugees in their search for employment. Given that the majority of asylum seekers who arrived in 2015 are male, they

may face double discrimination if employers tend to favour hiring women, as indicated by these studies. Furthermore, certain crimes committed by asylum seekers since 2015 have garnered significant media attention, bringing security concerns to the forefront. Consequently, the integration of asylum seekers and refugees has become a more contentious issue, with public attention shifting towards the perceived legitimacy of their claims and whether they deserve support (Alho 2021, 88-89).

Especially for biases based on names in job recruitment, Ahmad (2020, 491) came to the following conclusion in his research. Discrimination in Finnish job recruitment is clear. Finnish-sounding names got more job interview invitations, even when qualifications were the same. Also, women, no matter their name, got more interview invitations than men (Ahmad 2020, 491).

#### 4.3 Systemic Inequality

Airila et al. (2021, 29) conducted a study examining the employment outcomes of migrants. They discovered that conventional indicators of human capital, including education and language proficiency, positively impacted employment rates. However, it's worth noting that even when considering these factors, disparities in employment rates among humanitarian migrants remained unexplained (Airila et al. 2021, 29). Furthermore, Ahmad (2022, 1137-1138) examined the extent to which ethnic discrimination was mitigated when immigrant job applicants possessed more work experience compared to the majority population. The study's findings indicated that work experience did not effectively reduce discrimination. The research also revealed instances of exclusion, exemplified by employer preferences influenced by the ethnic origin reflected in the names of immigrant candidates. Specifically, the study discovered that English and Russian names were favoured over Somali and Iraqi names. These findings underscore the presence of discriminatory biases in hiring practices. Implementing additional measures, such as anonymous application procedures, during the job interview stage may offer potential solutions to prevent discrimination. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of such measures can vary (Ahmad 2022, 1137-1138).

State and system-based inequalities are also significant factors to consider. Masoud, Holm and Brunila (2021, 56) argues that governmentality provides a framework for understanding how power dynamics impact refugees and migrants, who often face perceptions of being unemployed and inadequately integrated (Masoud et al. 2021, 56). Ahmad (2022, 1139) highlights the existence of a pronounced ethnic hierarchy within the Finnish labour market, where non-European immigrants experience considerable disadvantages compared to their European counterparts (Ahmad 2022, 1139). Socio-cultural factors and the prevailing political climate also influence employment prospects for immigrants. Furthermore, Alho (2021, 96) points out that the Finnish labour market offers fewer low-skilled, low-paying jobs compared



to other European countries. High wage levels set by collective agreements demand high productivity, which can pose challenges for asylum seekers. While some advocate for greater wage flexibility to increase labour market participation rates, it should be noted that collective agreements can contribute to improved integration. Adverse economic conditions and limited employment opportunities in specific areas further contribute to low participation rates. Legal restrictions and the lack of relevant human capital act as barriers, impeding immigrants' access to the labour market. These various factors collectively shape the disparities and inequalities faced by immigrants in the Finnish labour market (Alho 2021, 96).

## 5 Discussion

In the discussion chapter, I will provide a summary of the results and reflect on their significance. The purpose of the literature review was to explore the employment problems of refugees in Finland.

This study has demonstrated the significant employment challenges that refugees encounter in Finland. Understanding the findings and results would be impossible without the complete theoretical framework. The theoretical framework included refugee, asylum seeker, refugee, immigrant-central concepts, path to refugee in Finland, refugee statistics and review in Finland, employment, and Finnish employment policies for refugees in Finland. To understand the employment problems faced by a refugee, it is necessary to know the whole process. The path to becoming a refugee and acquiring a residence permit in Finland entails a complex and challenging journey. The theoretical framework explains this whole process to us in detail.

The main findings of this study are the employment problems of refugees living in Finland. In all analyzed data, common problems experienced by refugees in employment problems were encountered. Notably, challenges encompassing racism, exclusion, social inequity, and discrimination were consistently encountered. Undoubtedly, these problems are just the tip of the iceberg, and the list will likely extend considerably. It's important to note that the data shows a collection of problems rather than one specific problem.

Another important finding of the research is the impact of various challenges and the unpredictability of all these problems. The process of becoming a refugee itself carries inherent uncertainties and potential traumas. Additionally, employment problems can make the entire process even more challenging. These problems can hinder the employment opportunities available to refugees, despite their efforts to make use of their own abilities and the employment benefits offered by Finland.

The literature review in this study is limited by the number of research articles utilized as primary data sources for conducting the review. There is a lack of current data on the subject,

particularly concerning articles addressing the "refugee" context and those available in the English language. Therefore, it should be noted that the conclusion part of the literature review is only a limited collection of data and not a comprehensive answer. Notably, all the analyzed data went through peer-review processes prior to publication, thus demonstrating their reliability. It's important to acknowledge that the Finnish articles that are available parallel to the published articles, were excluded. Furthermore, paid databases with relevant articles were not included in the review due to cost constraints.

## 6 Conclusion and Reflections

In the final chapter of this thesis, the initial focus will be on a discussion of the attained results, followed by a conclusion. Subsequently, the ultimate component of the thesis will share my personal reflections on the thesis process, professional growth, and future development will be outlined.

The main purpose of the entire thesis was to find answers to the research questions. The research question of this thesis: What are the problems faced by refugees living in Finland on the way to employment? The theoretical framework determined at the beginning of the thesis and the research findings supported each other, and thanks to this, the results and objectives of the thesis could be understood.

In our modern times, we often come across the term's "refugee" and "international protection." Especially the increasing number of wars, climate crises, the international conjuncture that changes day by day and the unknown are the indicators that we will hear these concepts more. Regrettably, people who are forced to flee their homes often face hardship and trauma. The most important issue to remember, especially in today's world, is that everyone can be a refugee; no one chooses to be a refugee, and no one is born to be a refugee.

Refugees in Finland, who fit their whole life into a backpack, start life from scratch again. They face difficulties in reaching employment, which is their greatest need to make a living. Although Finland provides support from the employment process, it is questioned how effective they are in reality. Will refugees deal with radically increasing racism and exclusion from society, or will they devote time to their future, career, and family?

I find it necessary to critically evaluate the existing policies and initiatives aimed at helping refugees find employment. While these policies have their merits, it is evident that there are notable gaps in their overall effectiveness. There should be a continuous assessment of their impact on the ground, with a view to making necessary adjustments to ensure they are achieving their intended objectives.

Empathy and understanding are essential components in addressing the issues faced by refugees. Through this research, I have come to appreciate the importance of empathy in designing effective policies and support systems. It is crucial for policymakers to put themselves in the shoes of refugees to truly grasp the depth of their challenges.

The research strongly suggests that more comprehensive support systems are required to assist refugees in their integration into the Finnish workforce. While Finland provides support, it is evident that further measures need to be taken to address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of this group. Language courses and cultural orientation programs, for instance, should be tailored to meet the specific needs of refugees. It is crucial to prioritize anti-racist training for both Finnish educational institutions and educators within these institutions. This training will play a pivotal role in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the education system, fostering a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.

Given the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the target group, I paid special attention to ethical guidelines and aimed to write objectively without any personal bias. To ensure accuracy and precision in my writing, I carefully selected my words. Ultimately, due to the sensitive nature of the topic and being the most logical method on the subject, I chose literature review as the research technique.

The process of writing my thesis was both challenging and rewarding. Active engagement in thesis counselling, particularly during the literature review phase, proved to be highly necessary and valuable. The guidance and support extended contributed substantially to the instructive and smoothness of the thesis. I gained a significant amount of valuable information that I will undoubtedly use in my future professional endeavors. The research, writing, and design process improved my academic skills, and I feel that I have gained new understanding and competencies that are necessary for my professional growth and development.

There is still a lot to discover and study regarding this topic in the future. Further research can be recommended to put more emphasis on the employment problems of refugees. Aside from the numerous employment initiatives, it is essential to investigate and address the obstacles that hinder the successful execution of these projects. Racism, exclusion, and unfair treatment are the major hurdles refugees face, and these challenges have the most detrimental impact on their lives. The first step to making a real difference should involve a collective effort to lessen these challenges. This will ensure that initiatives aimed at supporting refugees in their job search are as effective as possible.

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## Figures

Figure 1: Who are refugees? (UNHCR Global Trends Report 2021) .....	9
Figure 2: Applying for asylum in Finland (Finnish Immigration Service) .....	12
Figure 3: Employment and Unemployment Rates and Their Forecasts (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2022).....	17
Figure 4: Content Analysis Process (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018) .....	27

## Tables

Table 1: Asylum applications and quota refugee statistics from 2018 to 2022 (Finnish Immigration Service 2023)	14
Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	22
Table 3: Search Criteria and Results	23
Table 4: Introducing the Chosen Data	23
Table 5: Simplifying the Data	27
Table 6: Clustering the Data	28
Table 7: Abstraction of Data	29