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Skilled return migrants' experiences in the Finnish job market

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Abstract

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More and more Finnish expatriates are returning to Finland in hopes of reconnecting with friends and family, finding their place in Finnish society and working life, and even using their language and other skills learned abroad. But settling back to the country of origin and finding suitable employment is not so easy for all return expatriates. There is a lot of public discussion about immigrants and the need for skilled professionals in Finland but return migrants have often been left out of the discussion.

The purpose of this master's thesis was to investigate the experiences of return expatriates from two angles: What the job search process is like for a returnee after years, maybe decades of living abroad, and what kind of skills and knowledge returnees believe they have to offer because of years abroad.

The research was conducted by interviewing ten Finnish return expatriates about their experiences with returning to Finland and looking for work. Inclusion criteria was that participants had lived abroad for at least five years and return migrated no more than five years ago. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interview data was analysed using the inductive content analysis method, where codes and themes were generated for the most common responses.

The study revealed that return migrants experience many challenges in their job search and more information and support is needed. Networks and focus on international jobs brought good results in returnees' job searches. Regarding returnees' skills and knowledge, it was clear that the years abroad had helped develop many personal and social skills from adaptability and confidence to language skills and tolerance.

Keywords: Return migration, return migrant, expatriate, skills, knowledge, experiences

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Yhä useammat ulkosuomalaiset palaavat Suomeen toivoen löytävänsä uudelleen yhteyden ystäviinsä ja perheeseensä, paikkansa suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa ja työelämässä, sekä hyödyntävänsä ulkomailla opittuja kieli- ja muita taitojaan. Mutta kotimaahan paluu ja sopivan työn löytäminen ei ole kaikille paluumuuttajille helppoa. Suomessa puhutaan paljon maahanmuuttajista ja osaavien ammattilaisten tarpeesta, mutta paluumuuttajat ovat usein jääneet keskustelun ulkopuolelle.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia paluumuuttajien kokemuksia kahdesta näkökulmasta: millainen paluumuuttajan työnhakuprosessi on vuosien, jopa vuosikymmenten ulkomailla asumisen jälkeen, ja millaisia taitoja he uskovat omaavansa ulkomailla asuttujen vuosien tuloksena.

Tutkimus tehtiin haastattelemalla kymmentä paluumuuttajaa heidän kokemuksistaan liittyen Suomeen paluuseen ja työnhakuun. Osallistumiskriteerinä oli, että osallistujat olivat asuneet ulkomailla vähintään viisi vuotta ja palanneet enintään viisi vuotta sitten. Laadullista tietoa kerättiin puolistrukturoiduilla teemahaastatteluilla. Haastatteluaineisto analysoitiin induktiivisella sisällönanalyysimenetelmällä, jossa yleisimmille vastauksille generoitiin koodit ja teemat.

Tutkimus paljasti, että paluumuuttajat kohtaavat monia haasteita työnhaussa ja lisää tietoa ja tukea tarvitaan. Verkostoituminen ja keskittyminen kansainvälisiin töihin toivat hyviä tuloksia paluumuuttajien työnhauissa. Paluumuuttajien taitoihin ja osaamiseen liittyen oli selvää, että ulkomailla vietetyt vuodet ovat auttaneet kehittämään monia henkilökohtaisia ja sosiaalisia taitoja sopeutumiskyvystä ja itseluottamuksesta kielitaitoon ja suvaitsevaisuuteen.

Avainsanat: Paluumuutto, paluumuuttaja, ulkosuomalainen, osaaminen, kokemukset

Tämän opinnäytetyön alkuperä on tarkastettu Turnitin Originality Check -ohjelmalla.

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1 Introduction

Every year, thousands of Finnish expatriates return to Finland from different parts of the world, in hopes of settling back permanently. According to Tilastokeskus (2021), 9638 Finns moved back to Finland from abroad in 2020, which is the highest number in at least twenty years.

Many returnees feel that their degree, work experience, language skills and networks are not valued in Finland. It is easier to move out of Finland than to move back. Finland may not be enticing enough for many expatriates despite its number one position on many global fronts. Expatriate Finns are a considerable but still an invisible group, when discussing work-based immigration in Finland. (Strandberg 2020: 151-152.)

In recent years, the decrease in working age population has been one of the biggest hindrances to Finland's economic growth. Nowadays, it is not difficult to go work in another country. Highly educated skilled professionals have many choices where to work, nationally and globally. It is important to consider ways to maintain and advance Finland's draw to international professionals, while other countries may be easier to relocate and adjust to. Otherwise, there is a risk of a shrinking number of workers paying for growing social costs, due to the unfavorable age conformation. (Wessman 2017.)

With the "baby boomers", a large generation born from 1946 to 1964, reaching retirement age, there is a critical need of work force to replace them. Expatriate Finns are one group that could potentially be a partial solution. It is crucial that Finland is compelling enough as a country of residence, and the net international migration in Finland increases. (Heikkilä & Koikkalainen 2011; Pew Research Center 2008.)

Finland would benefit from making the return of expatriate families easy and attractive when they are considering where to live, so as many families as possible would decide to return to Finland. If expatriates don't return, the

benefits of them living abroad including their international skills and knowledge, remain outside of Finnish borders, and another country will collect the benefits instead. The public debate considering different options for filling the labour shortage in Finnish society has been missing the point of view of the return migration of Finnish people living abroad. (Warinowski 2012: 333.)

The purpose of this master's thesis is to examine the effects of expatriatism on the careers of Finns, and what happens when an expatriate Finn returns to Finland and searches for employment. Is it easy or challenging to find work if your employment history is mostly from another country, or when you have studied a whole degree abroad? Is international experience appreciated or avoided by Finnish employers?

By interviewing return migrants about their experiences, this study aims to identify any ways that returnees might need support in finding the kind of employment that is a good match for the skills and knowledge they have gained abroad.

2 Theoretical background

Finns migrate for a variety of reasons depending on their individual motivations. Some want to advance their career by working in another country, while others are motivated by love or family. It is also common to move abroad as a lifestyle choice, or to experience life in a warmer country or a bigger global city. (Heikkilä & Koikkalainen 2011: 6.) Usually Finns live abroad temporarily, but for many years, while marriages often have the effect of making the plans more permanent (Heikkilä 2011: 10).

2.1 Terminology

The term "expatriate Finn" (ulkosuomalainen) refers to a Finnish citizen or a person of Finnish descent who lives outside of Finland. Currently, there are around 300,000 Finnish citizens living abroad. (Ministry of the Interior 2021: 10.)

The term “returnee” or “return migrant” (paluumuuttaja) has been used in several instances. This master’s thesis is mainly focused on returnees or return migrants related to global mobility. In Finland the returnee term has often been used in reference to the Ingrian returnees from the former Soviet Union or about the descendants of the migratory flows to North America and Sweden. (Ministry of the Interior 2021: 13.) Return migration is the moving to Finland of people who have either Finnish ancestry or otherwise close connections to Finland (Maahanmuuttovirasto nd).

The term "expatriate" is not specifically named in international migration laws, unlike "immigrant," which is commonly referenced but lacks a universal definition. "Migrant" lacks a standardised definition and is sometimes used in place of "immigrant." (McLeod 2021.)

2.2 History of expatriatism

According to Green (2009), migration studies have mainly focused on immigration and settlement experiences, with little attention to expatriation. But emigration and expatriation provide reverse perspectives on immigration and are interconnected. One country’s emigrant is another’s immigrant, and an emigrant becomes an immigrant after arriving to their destination. Therefore, it is important to investigate both to understand migration.

Colonial officers dispatched overseas were referred to as “expatriates” during the era of European colonialism. For example, British colonial officers were sent to India temporarily with the intention of returning to Britain. In the modern day, expatriates are still locating abroad in search of new career opportunities or experiences, but voluntarily, intending to eventually return equipped with new skills and experiences. Global history has shaped migration experiences. Western expatriates have often benefited from colonial legacies, as European and American expatriates enjoy easier access to education and employment opportunities than immigrants from formerly colonised nations. On the other hand, immigrants and migrants from the Global South encounter racism,

discrimination, and credential recognition issues in Europe and North America. (McLeod 2021.)

Since World War II, there have been different stages of emigration from Finland. In the 1960s and 1970s, around 890 000 Finns emigrated to Sweden. Most of them returned to Finland later, and there were more returnees than emigrants in the 1980s and early 1990s. Since around the mid-1990s, an increasing number of Finns emigrated from Finland again, as Finland joined the European Union and economic globalisation made different countries more accessible. After the beginning of the 21st century, about 9,000–10,000 Finnish citizens have moved abroad each year. A total of 11,710 Finnish citizens moved abroad in 2016, making it a record year for Finnish emigration. (Ministry of the Interior 2021: 10.)

According to Heikkilä's (2011: 14) data, up to half of the Finns who migrated in the year 2010, left from the Uusimaa region. Many also left from Pirkanmaa, Ostrobothnia and Varsinais-Suomi areas. Young adults aged 25-34 moved abroad most often, totaling about one third of all migrants that year.

2.3 Returning to Finland

A total of 6560 expatriates returned to Finland between January and August of 2020, a third of all immigrants that moved to Finland in that period. Highly educated return migrants are beneficial and productive citizens to Finland if their integration is successful. (Jämsen nd.)

When Heikkilä & Pikkarainen (2008: 111) asked 430 Finnish expatriates about their plans, 40% said they planned to move back to Finland in the future, 53% did not and 7% were unsure. Women were more interested in returning to Finland than men. Expatriates who were living in a multicultural relationship considered moving to Finland the least likely. Heikkilä & Pikkarainen (2008: 113) also observed that higher education level the expatriates held, the more interested they were in returning to Finland.

Heikkilä & Pikkarainen (2008: 114) further discovered that a third of those expatriates who said they wanted to return to Finland were unsure about the timing. About a fifth planned to move when family and life circumstances would allow, and another fifth planned to move within the next 1 to 4 years. Over sixty percent planned to come specifically to work in Finland, and half of them thought that they would find employment without a problem. A quarter of those planning to return for work reasons did not think that finding employment would be likely, and another quarter was unsure.

According to Niemi et al.'s (2022: 93) research, 34 % of expatriates think it is likely they will return to Finland. Background, life situation and amount of time already spent abroad have an impact on this. Many of those that have children consider returning as children are born or starting school. Young people consider returning when they complete their studies abroad.

Heikkilä & Pikkarainen (2008: 114) argue that the reasons for expatriates staying or returning lie most commonly with work and family. Both can motivate the move, such as a good employment opportunity in Finland, but on the other hand, the threat of unemployment can prevent them from moving. An important consideration is also the spouse's possibilities of finding employment in Finland and learning the language. Family reasons can therefore keep an expatriate abroad, or motivate them to move, for example in case of divorce it might be appealing to return to familiar old networks.

Return migrants are expected to manage their move, job search and other affairs proficiently, even though it takes time to adjust back in the home country and to learn new concepts. As returnees are settling back to life in Finland, public officers for example should take into consideration the returnee's unawareness of current societal matters. (Heikkilä, 2013.)

When returning home to Finland, an expatriate Finn often brings along a foreign spouse. With that, the Finnish work market gains the returning Finn with the skills acquired abroad, but also the spouse's contribution to Finnish society. The expatriate's entire family and their integration need to be considered, to make

return migration more attractive to expatriate Finns. This includes not only work, but social life and children's education. (Heikkilä & Koikkalainen 2011: 27.)

2.4 Return migrants' employment after the return

Niemi et al. (2022: 78-81) discovered in their research, that about half of return expatriates had employment in Finland when returning, and two thirds were employed within the first year of living in Finland. Over half considered their career advancement possibilities in Finland good. However, both Finnish expatriates' still living abroad and those who have returned to Finland experience is that Finnish employers do not value knowledge and experience gained abroad. Job opportunities are the most important factor when deciding where to live, and expatriates and return expatriates do not consider Finland to be the best option. Finnish employers' lack of appreciation for international experience weakens Finland's appeal. (Niemi et al. 2022: 87.)

When Niemi et al. (2022: 28-30) asked Finnish expatriates still living abroad and return expatriates who were back in Finland about their impressions, most do not believe that Finnish employers value education and degrees from abroad. About a third believe that employers will value work experience from abroad. Return expatriates are more sceptical about this than expatriates still living abroad. More than half of return expatriates think that employers do not value the time spent abroad.

Vainio (2024) says the skills and knowledge of return migrants could be utilised even more effectively. The employment of returnees depends on the stage of life the person has moved abroad, how long they have lived there, and what kind of study and work experience they have accumulated. The utilisation of the competences of return migrants is influenced by how well they can articulate the competence and its benefits to organisations. Companies could be more open to different experiences and their utilisation. It requires an open mind, changing attitudes and curiosity.

2.5 Return migrants' skills and knowledge

Return migrants have multifaceted strengths and knowledge, and often demonstrate openness and tolerance in different areas of their lives. Yet many return migrants struggle to find their place in society. (Oksi-Walter, 2011: 25-26.) The career consequences of working internationally have often been discussed as being quite negative, although this is shortly after the return (Brewster et al. 2017).

Grenat (2024) says that the kind of knowledge gained while living abroad varies greatly depending on the person's background. A stay-at-home parent gains a different experience than someone who has worked for a large company or studied at a top university. These experiences will have a different value in the job market.

Vainio (2024) thinks that returnees acquire the exact life skills that are needed in working life, such as flexibility, resilience, adapting to a new country and culture, learning new things, and changing perspectives. In addition to this, language skills develop, and networks grow. A person who has lived in another environment is able to create better and more creative solutions to challenges.

There are highly qualified international skilled workers, but most of the employers do not recognise them, and they might not recognise their own potential even themselves, which keeps them hidden. Attributes like empathy, resilience, ability to solve problems, confidence and reliability are some of the most important qualities when hiring for a position. These are often possessed by international skilled workers, but recognising these attributes within the hiring process is difficult. International skilled workers have mainly been seen as people who are mobile, have good language skills and an understanding of different cultures. Other aspects of international knowledge have yet to be recognised. As the world has changed and progressed, international knowledge can no longer be classified as only these traditional definitions. (Siivonen 2023: 7-8.)

Naturally return migrants view things from a wider perspective and compare their new and old home countries. After living abroad for a long time, return migrants possess multiculturalism, which is mental richness that they want to hold on to. Returnees bring with them greater knowledge and new information to their home country. This wealth of knowledge about different cultures should be seen as a richness in different functions of Finnish society. (Heikkilä 2013.)

The longer a person has lived abroad, the more they consider themselves an international person. Even if experience doesn't directly transfer to skills and knowledge, it would be a mistake to think that experience couldn't produce it. There is a clear correlation between living abroad and being international. Those that consider themselves the most international move, communicate, produce, and consume internationally. There is a lot of value in international knowledge, and in the future there will be even more. (Siivonen 2013: 43.)

2.6 The need for international skilled workers

Global competition for professionals has become more difficult, as each country is trying to make themselves more appealing. The working life must be ready to become international, so that it will be easier for international professionals to come work in Finland. Digitalisation makes working without geographical borders easier than before. (Keskuskauppakamari 2021.)

According to Grenat (2024), many who have studied abroad say that employers do not value their education and achieved degrees the same way, degrees from Finland are valued, even if the degree is from a well-recognised university. Simultaneously, the corporate world is seeking international knowledge and experience. Often the employer is afraid of hiring the first foreigner to the team because the working language would need to be changed to English. Perhaps hiring a returnee would be an easier step in the right direction in adding diversity to the team. Naturally, returnees must have relevant skills that are needed in the Finnish job market, no one will be hired solely for having the experience of living abroad. Employers in Finland still put a high emphasis on degrees, while experience and results are not valued in the same manner.

While searching for solutions on future labour shortage, return migrants could be raised as one possible solution, along with the discussion on the employment of immigrants. Leveraging the expertise gained abroad is not just about whether expatriates move back to Finland or stay abroad. The crucial question is whether the returnees' skills acquired abroad are wanted to be used to their full potential. Now, this knowledge remains largely untapped. (Warinowski 2012: 333.)

3 Purpose, aims and objectives

The purpose of this master's thesis is to examine the effects of expatriatism on the careers of Finns, and what happens when an expatriate Finn returns to Finland and searches for employment. Is it easy or challenging to find work if your employment history is mostly from another country, or when you have studied a whole degree abroad? Is international experience appreciated or avoided by Finnish employers?

By interviewing return migrants about their experiences, this study aims to identify any ways that returnees might need support in finding the kind of employment that is a good match for the skills and knowledge they have gained abroad.

The research questions are as follows:

- What is the job search process like for a Finn who is returning to Finland after living abroad?
- What kind of skills and knowledge do Finnish expatriates gain and develop while living abroad?

4 Research method and data collection

This study was conducted using the qualitative research approach. Creswell & Creswell (2018: 23) describe qualitative research being about exploring and understanding individuals or groups in relation to a human problem. Data is collected in a participant setting and then analysed and interpreted by the

researcher, by dividing the data into themes. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018: 34) the qualitative research method uses emerging methods and asks open-ended questions. Qualitative research data is generally either interview data, observation data, document data or audiovisual data.

Qualitative research approach was selected as a research method for this study because it allowed the subjects of the study, return migrants, to answer open-ended questions and tell their story how they want to tell it. The qualitative method allowed space for them to talk about their experiences, instead of for example answering multiple choice questions, where the answer choices might not have matched with what they wanted to say.

The data for this study was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with Finnish return migrants. Doyle (2022) explains that in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer will have a list of questions to guide the interview but might not ask them all or ask them in a different order than is on the list. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this thesis, although not every question was necessarily asked in each interview.

4.1 Setting and participants of the study

The research was done independently without a partner organisation. Interviewees were recruited from a Facebook group called “Paluumuuttajat” (Returnees in English). Research participants were recruited by posting to the group in the beginning of September 2023 and asking who would like to be interviewed about the topic for master’s thesis research. At the time of recruiting interviewees, the group had approximately 4500 members, consisting of primarily return migrants, but also those still planning or considering a return to Finland.

Selection criteria for interviewees was that they had to be Finns who had lived abroad for at least five years and worked in the country of residence. Additional criteria were that they had returned to Finland between six months and five years ago. This was so that they had had some time to see how employment back in Finland would go, but also not too long a time had passed from the

return, so that the experience was still fresh in their minds. The first ten people who fulfilled these criteria were interviewed for this research.

All the interviewees were women. Although there are many men in the *Paluumuuttajat* Facebook group, none reached out to participate in the study. Four participants had lived in just one foreign country, five had lived in two countries and one interviewee had lived in four countries before returning to Finland. In total, the participants had lived in nine different countries, seven of them being European countries.

Six interviewees had lived abroad between nine and fifteen years, and four participants had lived abroad a total of between 22 and 29 years. Four women had moved back to Finland in 2023 and the rest between 2018 and 2022. Half named family connections as the main reason for their return. Other reasons mentioned were a denied visa renewal, changes in employment, the COVID-19 pandemic, and personal reasons.

Four interviewees had studied and earned bachelors, masters, and/or doctorates degrees while living abroad. The fields in which they worked varied from government, education, translation and nursing to business, logistics, travel, and media. Several participants had worked in a customer service job in at least one occasion during their years abroad.

4.2 Data collection and analysis

A total of ten return migrants were interviewed about their experiences. Interviews continued until saturation was reached: no new information was coming up in the interviews. Each participant's story was different as far as their background and countries lived in for example. After ten interviews, it was clear that there were many commonalities between the experiences of the interviewees, as many factors and themes had been repeated in several interviews.

Interview questions can be found in Appendix 1. The interviews took place in September and October 2023, and were conducted as video interviews on

Zoom, lasting between twenty and forty minutes each. The interviews were recorded on the Zoom platform and then transcribed into text for analysis.

The interview data was analysed using the inductive content analysis method. According to Kyngäs (2019: 13), the inductive content analysis method uses an abstraction process in reducing and grouping data. This can be done with open or half-structured data, and it helps the researcher answer the study questions using concepts, categories, or themes.

Inductive content analysis method is a data analysis method commonly used with text-based data, such as written transcripts of verbal interactions. In inductive content analysis, a summary of the contents of different individual texts in a data set is produced, and the analysis is systematically developed through an inductive approach, from a close reading of the texts rather than searching the text for a pre-determined list of content items. Inductive content analysis uses iterative coding, which means that the codes used to label the data are developed while coding, based on the content of the data. This is different from deductive content analysis, where the codes are predetermined and usually based on previous research in the field of study. (Gillam & Vears 2022: 112-113.)

Iterative re-coding is a crucial step in inductive content analysis method in establishing that the newly identified codes were not forgotten in earlier coding rounds. New aspects will continue to arise from the data as more documents are analysed. The researcher will add to and adapt the list of codes during the analytic process. Content categories and subcategories will be created through coding, comparing, and grouping. When the researcher is carrying out interviews or focus groups, the content categories can be intertwined with the questions the researcher is asking the participants. (Gillam & Vears 2022: 113-114.)

4.3 Ethical questions

According to Länsimies-Antikainen (2009: 24), informed consent refers to the process where the researcher informs a potential study participant about the

purpose and details of the study in a sufficient way, and after making sure the participant understands the information, has him or her sign a written informed consent.

The participants in this study were found by posting to the *Paluumuuttajat* Facebook group, sharing about the topic and purpose of the study, and asking that interested participants would email the researcher directly to show interest. The researcher then replied to the emails by sharing the participant information letter and data privacy notice (Appendix 2) and the Metropolia consent form (Appendix 3). Participants were asked to sign the consent form and return it to the researcher via email before the interview. In this process, informed consent for this study was acquired from each participant.

Data privacy notice was needed because people were interviewed about personal aspects of their lives such as moves and employment. The interviews needed to be recorded so that the interview data could be processed. To organise the interviews, the researcher was briefly in possession of data such as names and email addresses, but no register was upheld with this information. The only personal data that was collected for analysis is the interview recording with a person's voice.

When an interview was scheduled, the interviewee was assigned a number by which she was identified, and the name was then longer used anywhere in the data. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained again what the study was for and how the information given would be used. Signed consent forms remained in the researcher's email, which is secured by a password and only the researcher has access to. The consent forms were not saved, printed, or shared elsewhere.

Participating in the research study was completely optional. Participants were given the choice to be interviewed in Finnish or English, depending on which language they were more comfortable with sharing their experiences. Interviews were carried out via videocall in the Zoom platform. The researcher took the calls from her home in a separate room with the door closed. It was the participants' choice if they wanted to keep their camera on during the interview.

Some did and some did not. The interviews were recorded in Zoom and as a backup on the researcher's password protected phone, which ended up being easier to transcribe from. Each interview was transcribed into text within a few days after the interview. The interviews that were conducted in Finnish were first transcribed in Finnish, then translated into English for analysis. Recordings were deleted after transcription.

Interview data, the transcribed interviews, were saved on Metropolia's secure drive, which was used solely for the master studies and only the author had access to. The interviews were transcribed and where applicable, translated without delay. The results were analysed about three months later. Participant consent forms are going to be deleted as the study is completed by April 2024. Transcribed text and results will also be deleted after completion of the master's thesis process.

Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK (2021) has defined the instances when an ethical review before conducting research in human sciences. An ethical review would be needed for example if participating in the research caused a risk of physical or mental harm for the participants or if the research focused on children (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2021). None of the instances were valid in the case of this research, and therefore an ethical review was not needed. The author is an experienced interviewer as she organises interviews in her current job role, as well as trains volunteer interviewers. She was therefore knowledgeable on how to conduct herself in the interviews.

4.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability is one of the most important measurements in determining the quality of data. In other words, it is the level to which the data can be considered accurate. Validity refers to the conclusions made based on the evidence found in the study. (Wagemaker, 2020: 11.)

In this master's thesis, reliability was ensured by documenting the interview process in detail with audio or video recordings, notes, and observations. In

addition, the author reflected on her own biases and preconceptions that might influence the research and interpretation of research results. The author is a return migrant herself, which initially inspired the choice of topic through natural curiosity on the it, and on the experiences of others. However, the author's return migration occurred more than ten years ago, which had allowed plenty of time for not only self-reflection, but also for settling into life in Finland, before this research ever began.

An important reason for the topic choice was the timeliness of it, considering the lack of skilled workers in many fields and the societal discussion on it. As Warinowski (2012: 333) mentioned, the perspective of return migrants and the skills and knowledge that they have to offer has been missing from the discussion, and overall, there has not been much research done on return migrants, especially from the point of view of skills, so this was important to investigate and, in the process, more ideas for future research emerged.

To ensure validity, a carefully planned interview outline that included the relevant questions was used. This supported the goal that the data collected would directly address the research topic and objectives. A pilot test was conducted by first interviewing one person from the target group as a test. This not only provided information about how the interview questions worked in relation to the research objectives, but also allowed testing of the data collection materials including Zoom as the interview platform and its recording function.

5 Results

The results that emerged from the ten interviews are presented in this chapter, by research question. First, results about the participants' job search experiences are presented. Next, there is an overview of what was discovered about the skills which returnees thought they had developed in their years of living, studying, and working abroad. For each topic, two main categories emerged, with a few subcategories under each one. There are figures below illustrating the breakdown of the results to both questions. Results are presented with most common themes first, by category. Finally, participants

share what advice they would give to someone who is planning to return to Finland from abroad, and what they would like to say to Finnish employers.

5.1 Return migrant Finns' job search process and experiences

The participants' experience with job search in Finland after moving back from abroad varied in many ways, but there were some themes that were repeated in several interviews. The results pertaining to the first research question can be divided into two categories: challenges and context.

5.1.1 Common challenges

Looking for work in Finland after many years away was challenging for most participants, as they were used to and familiar with the job search process of a different culture. Curriculum Vitae and professional terminology had to be translated, and the participants had to spend time and think about how to verbalise and market their skills and knowledge in new ways. Despite the difficulties, most interviewees had managed to find a job within a few months of moving to Finland.

Participant 1: It took me a really long time to find a permanent job. So, it was not easy. I wanna say I sent 30+ applications at least.

Participant 10: I left abroad right after my graduation exams, that's where I've been since then, 26 years ago. When I came back, it took so long that it was a bit difficult for me because I don't have that Finnish degree.

Another challenge that many participants mentioned was that they felt there was a contradiction between what employers were saying to them and what was happening in their job search. Many times, employers' words did not match their actions, or the situation overall. Many employers were unsure what to do with foreign degrees. In some cases, employers considered the returnees overqualified for the jobs.

Participant 3: There's a lot of talk about how they are looking for that experience and people having different backgrounds, but then when it comes the reality is, they don't think that a degree from

universities outside of Finland are anything. I feel like there's a big attitude issue with like well you didn't go to school here, your degree is from there, they don't know what to do with that.

Participant 1: I got feedback from people saying that since you have a master's degree and work experience, you're going to get any job you want, but that was not the reality. I also realised that since I had a master's degree, I was not hired as an assistant because I was overqualified, but at the same time I was not hired as a manager because I only had four years of work experience.

Participant 5: Everybody is always talking about international experts you know luring them back to Finland and you know we value their international expertise and everything that they've done elsewhere, but then when push comes to shove, what they're really looking for is some kind of a unicorn who is both international and has extensive experience in Finland, which is really hard to get you know.

Regarding their job search process upon returning to Finland, the participants were also asked what kind of help or support they would have wished for. Nearly all interviewees felt that there was not enough support available for someone returning from abroad. They would have wished for information specific to their situation, such as more help from the unemployment office, in finding international jobs or changing their Curriculum Vitae to fit the Finnish context.

Participant 7: I would have liked more from the employment office too, that they would have given me more options and what do they think I can do in Finland with my work experience and education.

Participant 1: More of the expectation management of how to write a CV versus resume. What type of words are being used here, how to approach it and how to write about yourself here. Kind of this type of expectation management that you know even though you exceeded all the expectations by doing such great things, people might not see it like that so maybe in a way you need to advertise yourself less or put yourself less out there. I struggled mostly with writing the cover letters so that was my biggest... I think. That was my biggest challenge.

The importance of networks came up as an important source of support.

Participant 2: I feel that maybe I did get support and on the other hand I had networks already and well... I would think that if there are no networks at all then it could be very difficult.

One participant would have wished for a peer mentor from the same field of expertise who had gone through a similar moving process before but thought it would have been hard or perhaps even impossible to find. Another could have used some information about how Finnish unions and benefits work since those topics were unfamiliar. It emerged that often it is assumed that returnees know what to do and how things work, since they speak Finnish, but that's not necessarily the case, as described by participant 3.

Participant 3: Some of the processes you know I was gone for (number) years, and I just visited, came here as a tourist. So certain things I still don't know, I still have to ask I'm like what do I have to do. Some stupid things that everybody thinks is simple. And just I mean everything is online. That's no problem but just knowing where to go and look for things and I don't know. I think people assume things a lot and yeah, I do speak Finnish I speak English, so I should be able to navigate through these things but I'm new to this Finland in 2020s. I left Finland before the 2000s, so things are a whole lot different.

5.1.2 Importance of context

According to the results, the context or approach of return migrants' job search, meaning what kinds of jobs participants were looking for and where, was another significant factor in the returnees' job search, making it the second category. This surfaced especially in the importance of connections and networks, which many participants emphasised. Three interviewees had been employed through connections or word of mouth, without even applying for the job.

Participant 2: So how I ended up getting a job was through word of mouth and connections. And that was a job that I never officially applied for. So, connections were that useful and I was lucky in that way.

Participant 3: The crazy thing was that they recruited me. Cause I didn't even know that they had these projects. So, this woman just heard about my background, and something must have clicked and

she's like I need to ask her if she's interested in this job or this project. So, I really didn't feel like I had to sell myself a whole lot.

On the other hand, not all returnees were still well connected in Finland after many years, even decades abroad.

Participant 5: I didn't really have any help because I didn't have those kinds of connections in Finland to reach out to.

Context was also important in terms of what kinds of jobs the participants were looking for. Many mentioned looking specifically for international jobs, in hopes that their skills would be valued in an international company or working environment. This had turned out to be a successful approach for many.

Participant 4: I was intentionally looking for companies that have an international presence and that would require international travel and understanding of different working cultures or different business cultures, let's put it this way.

Participant 9: I had some really good work experience from abroad which I think definitely helped me get the job. But I have to bear in mind it is a very international environment. If it had been a Finnish employer, I don't think they would have appreciated it the same way.

Figure 1.

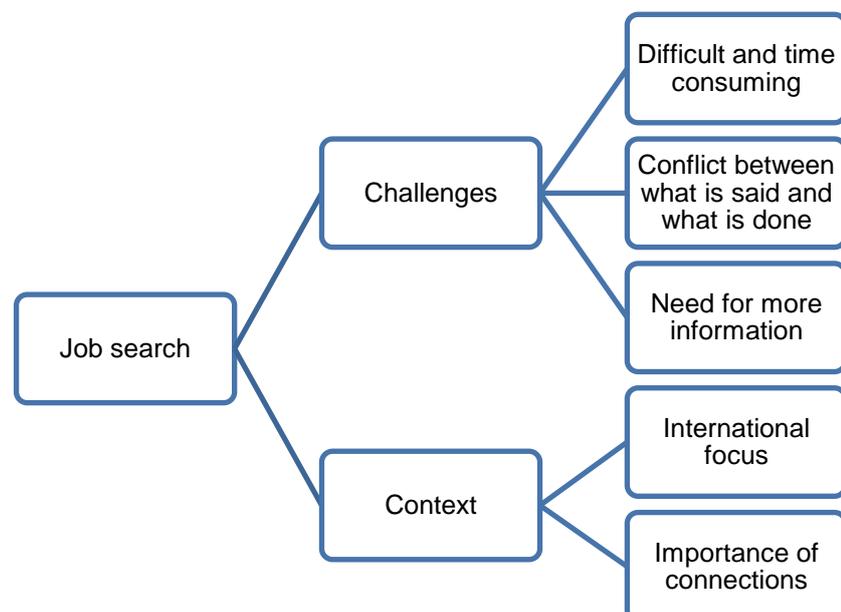


Figure 1. Results to first research question

5.2 Return migrant Finns' skills and knowledge

Regarding the second research question, it emerged during the interviews that the interviewees had gained a plethora of skills and knowledge during their years abroad, much of which can be useful in both personal and working life. After reviewing the types of knowledge the return migrants talked about, it was divided into two categories, personal and social.

5.2.1 Personal skills

The most mentioned personal skill in the interviews was a different perspective. The interviewees talked about how living in another culture had expanded their perspectives in many ways.

Participant 8: It kind of gives you more perspective when you have ten million other people around you and they come like from every single walk of life and background and you understand you can't always fit to the norm, you can't always follow your notebook or guidelines and there has to be more flexibility in a way things work.

Participant 3: Just the outspokenness and certain things we had to go by the book, but we also had to look outside the box. So, there was a certain flexibility and being able to see the big picture.

Participant 9: I think outside the box number one. So, you have this sort of wider perspective of thinking and finding solutions as well.

The next personal skill that was mentioned several times was confidence. Living abroad had boosted the confidence of many participants, as they had needed to navigate many new situations over the years to make a life in another country.

Participant 10: You have to be a certain kind of person, first of all, to have gone to live abroad, and managed to find an apartment and a job there and learned the language. Many Finns here don't have that. They may have those papers, but listen, when they're in a job interview, they don't know what to say. I believe that returnees can do well, and I believe that's why I got a job, that I was the kind that made them think, wow, that's really such a self-confident person.

Participant 5: I really am a much more outgoing person, somebody who's not afraid of saying: "I'm an expert in this, I know what I'm doing, you should hire me because of this." And I think that is a strength, especially at the job search stage to be confident in yourself.

Participant 9: I think another one is bravery. You're not so confined and you're not so you know regulated by rules or whatever, you're more of a risktaker. I think that's one. And yeah, just more confident, I think.

Participants also felt that their ability to adapt had grown a lot, making it the third and final personal skill.

Participant 9: I'm a quick thinker and having been in different situations and settings where you know the working tempo is different, you can adapt, because you haven't been through one system where the culture or whatever is you know very similar to the previous place, instead you've experienced many different ones and different ways of working so you can just take the best bits and take that to the new role.

Participant 2: Well maybe kind of patience and long nerves and that things might not necessarily go as Finns are used to taking care of things.

5.2.2 Social skills

The second category of skills developed while living abroad was social skills; skills that help us navigate inter-personal relationships and different group situations. The thing that stood out the most in the answers was that interviewees felt that they had become more tolerant and open-minded during their years abroad.

Participant 6: Overall, when I lived in (name of city) it is really colorful there, there are people from all over. So, I also felt that it's good at this job that I have met people from so many different countries and I'm not like prejudiced or like I don't right away wonder if people speak English with a little bit of a different accent or they have some different habits, so I am sort of or I feel I'm pretty open-minded.

Participant 8: I would say what I've gained is being definitely more tolerant and more diplomatic and open-minded. And I would see

that those all are kind of skills or traits that Finland needs a bit more and be more adaptable to change.

Participant 4: I think that international part because especially when you're working in a cultural melting pot like (name of city) you come across a lot of different cultures. You have to work with people from very different backgrounds and I don't think that's the kind of experience you would get in Finland. We do have some international...obviously employees here as well but not that many. And I think that's very valuable.

Many participants said that their people skills had grown overall, because of living and working in another culture and a more culturally diverse environment that Finland offers.

Participant 1: Different kinds of umm... way of understanding people. I feel like I have a better understanding of, or I accept people more as they are and understand different points of views.

Participant 9: I've worked with so many different nationalities and I've met so many different people in my working years that it just brings this insight and this sort of understanding, deeper level of understanding of how to work with people.

The participants' language skills had grown as well in using the languages in their daily lives and in a working environment. Language skills could perhaps be considered a personal skill as well, but since they enable us to communicate better with others, it is included in the social skills category.

Participant 7: Speaking is completely different when you have been speaking that language for thirty years, it will come quite naturally, and I believe that those conversations will be different from someone who has studied it at school.

Participant 10: There are a few others here who speak English, but can you use it fluently in work-related conversations and job-seeking conversations.

Figure 2.

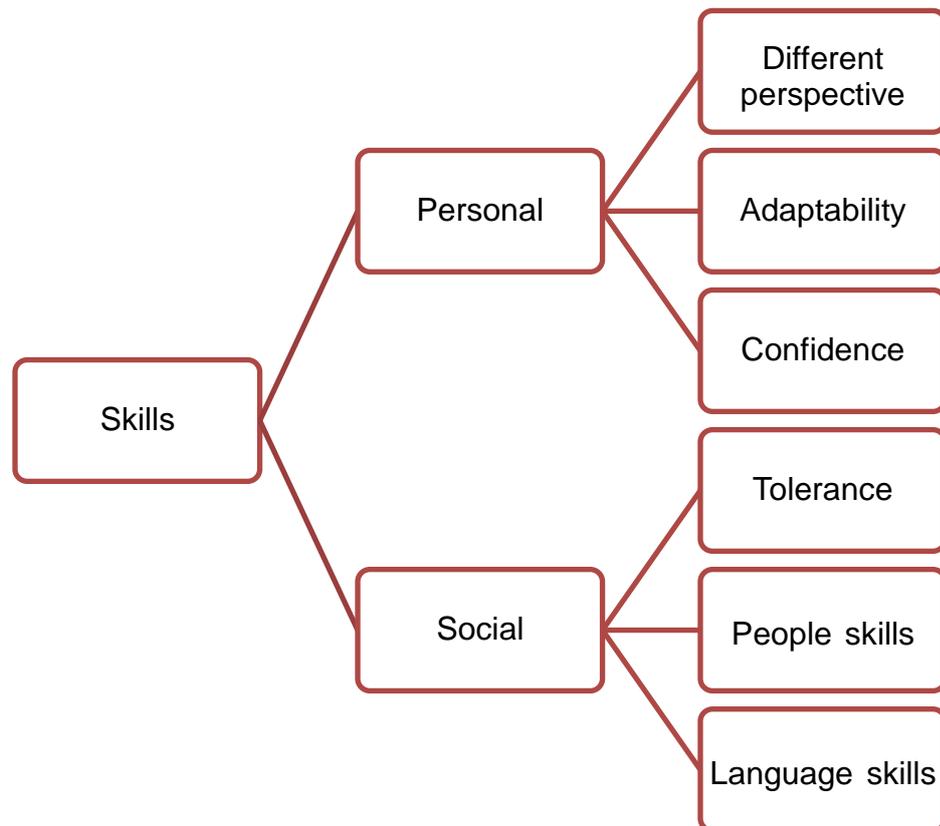


Figure 2. Results to second research question

5.3 Advice to other return migrants

When asked what advice participants would give to other return migrants, they once again stressed the importance of networking, which repeatedly came up in the interviews overall when discussing their job search experiences.

Participant 2: I would return to the network thing... I don't know if there even are any... Maybe there aren't any like their own service specifically for return expats so well... It depends really a lot on what field you are working in. Other fields it's just easier to find work than others and the knowledge and international experience might not be appreciated similarly everywhere.

Participant 9: Don't be afraid to you know contact people, network, ask for help. And yeah, just you know put yourself out there. Many jobs these days you know someone recommends someone. I think that's always been the case. But you know I think it helps to know people, have people to...you know guide you a little bit.

Participant 10: But any opportunity to network like that and announce that you are interested in a certain kind of work would probably be worthwhile.

Other job search related advice was to start the job search early, highlight your specific skills and make a good Curriculum Vitae. One returnee had observed that many fellow returnees search for jobs with a broad profile and thought that focusing the job search to a specific area where the applicant is highly skilled would be a better approach. A couple of interviewees advised others to plan well for all the practicalities of the move.

Participant 5: I would say, start planning early because especially if you've spent a good amount of time abroad it does surprise you how bureaucratic the moving process really is and how things sort of have to happen in a chain. It is a long process and I wish I could have started it a little bit earlier.

Advice was given to prepare yourself to the fact that things have changed in Finland over the years, and not to compare the previous home country to the new one, but to try to live in the moment and adapt. One participant advised others to prepare for the reverse culture shock that can happen when returning to your home country after many years away.

Participant 1: The culture shock coming back will be terrible. Time helps... Learning from your mistakes. It is what it is sometimes but hopefully eventually someone will see the value in everyone and find the best spot for them and be able to put them in a situation where they really can excel and bloom. And yeah, reverse culture shock is a real thing.

5.4 Messages to employers

At the end of the interviews, participants were asked what they would like to say to Finnish employers. Many interviewees brought up that they would like employers to "think outside the box" more, give people a chance and get to know them.

Participant 1: I'd like them to try to think outside of the box and try to think outside of Scandinavia and the EU in terms of what they might learn, if not as how to make more profit and how to sell more, but the human communication the human touch, the how to get

along with other people, how to represent yourself and how to network, all that. That they would give better opportunity to those who have a lot of different experience to really explain what they know, because it is really hard to write it in a one-page letter.

One way of thinking outside the box would be to think of diversity more broadly than before, as participant 4 suggests.

Participant 4: Diversity doesn't mean that you hire Finnish LGBT community members. Diversity also means that you hire people with blond hair and blue eyes but who have traveled abroad and disagree with you. They bring a different vibe to the conversation when they've seen other things that you know the Finnish employers might not have seen. Diversity can mean so many things.

Another topic that was mentioned multiple times regarding what returnees wanted to say to Finnish employers was how employers view degrees from outside Finland.

Participant 6: It is strange to assume that degrees studied in Finland would somehow be more grand and better and that in some other countries they could be somehow nonsense degrees. So then might be good to find out about things a little, about what level the universities are in other countries and so on. It's kind of based on some imagination if they think that foreign degrees are somehow worse.

Participant 4: Many Finnish employers think that the Finnish education system is the best in the world. It is one of the best in the world. But our universities are not the only universities in the world that apply or that are relevant. So being more open-minded about the education from abroad. It is ridiculous how this is sometimes being ignored. It works on the commercial side. Obviously if you're a licensed practitioner it's a different thing. So, education from other countries might even be better than from Finland. Awful to admit but it's possible.

Finally, there's the wish for employers to recognise international expertise.

Participant 5: Start putting your money where your mouth is and recognise people's expertise from other countries. That's really the message.

6 Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative research was to learn about the job search experiences of former expatriates and the skills and knowledge that they bring with them when they return to Finnish working life. These are broad questions and each person's experience varies depending on personal skillset, educational background, the field or work, number of years spent abroad and many other factors. However, several themes stand out in both theory and the interview results.

According to Heikkilä (2013), return migrants are expected to settle back to Finland and handle things without help. Many interviewees mentioned they did not first know how things worked or how to apply for jobs in Finland. They would have wished for more help or at least information from their municipality in the beginning. In addition to the challenges settling in, finding work or the job search process itself was challenging for many, as it varies or has different nuances in different cultures.

Most of the participants of this study had found work relatively quickly, within the first few months of living in Finland. Still, their experience was that employers did not value or did not know what to do with their foreign degrees. Niemi et al. (2022: 78-81) received similar results in their study, but slightly more positive in terms of the time it took for returnees to find work. The importance of connections and networks in finding work stood out in the interviews. Depending on how many years were spent abroad, returnees may have many connections left in Finland when they move back. But as Vainio (2024) explains, expatriates learn to grow their networks, so those skills can surely be used to make new ones, even though it may take time.

The theoretic background and interviews both brought up a wide variety of skills that former expatriates possess, that are valuable not only in working life but in other areas as well. Siivonen (2023: 7-8) states that expatriates are often known for being mobile, possessing good language skills and understanding different cultures, but points out that they are usually also empathic, resilient, able to solve problems, confident and reliable. The interviewees mentioned many of the

same skills and qualities. Also, the untapped potential in returnees was repeated in both theoretical background and interview results.

Based on the participants' experiences, there is a need for more information for return migrants, both on the return migration process itself with all its bureaucracy, but also on how to search for employment in Finland. It should not be assumed that return migrants are familiar with these things simply because their background is from Finland, when after years, even decades abroad, they may need nearly as much support as an immigrant who has never been to Finland before.

In this master's thesis, the author was an active participant in the research process, involving interview preparations, conducting the interviews, active listening, transcribing, and reading and studying the data multiple times to become familiar with it before analysis. From reading and re-reading the transcriptions, codes and themes slowly emerged in the participants' responses.

The sample size of ten interviews turned out to be sufficient to get interviewees with diverse career backgrounds that had lived in many different countries, but, they had more in common with each other than one might think. A larger sample size would have provided an even wider variety of experiences, but not necessarily much new in terms of results. Only ten interviewees were available, returned the signed consent form and scheduled an interview time with the researcher. To recruit more participants, the researcher would have needed to re-post to the *Paluumuuttajat* Facebook group, which might have seemed too intrusive. When transcribing and analysing the results, it became clear that saturation was indeed reached.

7 Conclusion

What stands out the most in the theoretical background and results of this master's thesis, is the substantial contradiction between the talk about needing international skilled workers and the reality of hiring processes as shared by return migrant. Even though many had found work within a few months, they

communicated that they were not able to use their skills and knowledge as much as they would have wished.

In general, there seems to be a higher threshold to hire someone with a differing career path, even in cases where it is clear the applicant is very knowledgeable and experienced. Certain kinds of work require specific degrees for safety and other reasons, but there are also many fields where we could be more flexible and evaluate the applicant's skills, experience, and motivation, not just the degree.

Further investigation is warranted to explore how knowledgeable and educated return migrants and the need for skilled workers could meet. Understanding the hiring processes of major employers could be the key in solving this problem, specifically what happens when an application from a return migrant or someone who has a degree from another country is received by potential employers, and what kinds of profiles get people hired. This concept would require implementation in a manner that yields realistic and unbiased outcomes. Consideration might be given to implementing an anonymous recruitment process, or a focus group with employers, investigating their attitudes toward international degrees and work experience.

It could also be investigated how many returnees leave Finland again permanently because they cannot find work here or feel otherwise unsettled in Finnish society. More importantly, solutions should be looked for to the most faced problems of returnees and their families, so that they would want to stay in Finland, and they would not be lost again to another country in a situation where their valuable skills and experience are desperately needed.

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Outline of interview questions

BACKGROUND

- What country/countries did you live in and for how long?
- Tell me about your life abroad. What kind of work did you do? Did you study?
Were you happy with your job?
- When did you return to Finland?
- What were the main reasons you returned to Finland?

JOB SEARCH

- Tell me about your job search when returning to Finland. Did you start the job search before returning or after?
- What kind of work were/are you looking for?
- Where did you get help for the job search?
- How long did it take for you to get a job?
- Are you happy with your current job? Do you get to use your skills at it?
- In your experience, how did the Finnish employers' view your job experience from abroad during your job search? Was it seen as a positive or a negative?
- During your job search, how did you market or communicate the things you learned abroad?

SKILLS AND ADVICE

- What kind of skills do you believe you have specifically as a result of living and working abroad?
- Have you been able to use these skills? If yes, how? If no, how would you like to use them?
- What kind of support or advice would you have wished for in the job search as a returnee?
- What advice would you give to a Finnish expatriate who is planning to move back to Finland?
- What would you like to say to Finnish employers?

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title: Return expatriates' experiences with job search in Finland

Invitation to participate in a research study

We'd like to invite You to take part in our research study, where we examine what kinds of experiences return expats have with job search in Finland and what kind of know-how they have from living abroad that they would like to use in the Finnish work force.

We would like to interview 10-15 return expats who have lived abroad at least five years and returned to Finland between one and five years ago. We also require that the interviewees did some kind of work in the foreign country of residence. We are looking for study participants from the Facebook group Paluumuuttajat.

This information sheet describes the study and Your role in it. Before you decide, it is important that You understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for You. Please take time to read this information and discuss it with others if You wish. If there is anything that is not clear, or if You would like more information, please ask us. After that we will ask You to sign a consent form to participate in the study.

Voluntary nature of participation

The participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. If You withdraw from the study or withdraw Your consent, any data collected from You before the withdrawal can be included as part of the research data.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the research is to examine what the job search process is like for a Finn who is returning to Finland after living abroad and what kind of know-how Finnish expatriates gain and develop while living abroad.

Who is organizing and funding the research?

The research is conducted by Eeva Link and supervised by Heini Maisala-McDonnell from Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. There is no funding for the research.

What will the participation involve?

Participation in the study involves one video interview per participant, where the participant can share their story as a former expat. The researcher will ask questions relating to the topic and record audio so that the answers can be saved for analysis. The interview will be conducted via videocall and will be maximum one hour in length. The study is a qualitative research and planned time of completion is spring 2024.

Possible benefits of taking part

Contributing to research and knowledge on this important topic that has not been researched much so far. Potential benefits to future returnees/the returnee community when there is more information and awareness about the topic in society.



Participant Information Sheet

Possible disadvantages and risks of taking part

None.

Financial information

Participation in this study will involve no cost to You. You will receive no payment for Your participation.

Informing about the research results

The study will be published in theseus.fi upon completion. Participants will not be identifiable from any report of publication placed in the public domain. This study is Master's Thesis of Eeva Link.

Termination of the study

The researcher conducting the study can also terminate the study in case of unforeseeable hindrance.

Further information

Further information related to the study can be requested from the researcher / person in charge of the study.

Contact details of the researchers

Researcher / Student

Name: Eeva Link

Tel. number: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Person in charge of the study / Supervisor

Name: Heini Maisala-McDonnell

Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences / Faculty

Tel. number: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Appendix to the Participant Information Sheet: A Privacy Notice for Scientific Research

Within this study, Your personal data will be processed according to the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (679/2016) and current national regulation. The processing of personal data will be described in the following items.

Data controller of the study

Data controller is the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data.

Eeva Link: Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Myllypurontie 1, 00920 Helsinki.

Contact person for matters related to the processing of personal data Eeva Link, [REDACTED]**Types of personal data that will be collected**

Interview recordings with the participants' voices will be collected anonymously for transcription. Participants can choose if they'd like to have their camera on during the interview or not.

There is no statutory or contractual requirement to provide Your personal data, participation is entirely voluntary.

Personal data protection principles

The interviews will be conducted in Zoom and recorded there. The recordings will be transcribed into text in Microsoft Word.

The data that is to be processed in the information systems has been protected using the following:

user ID password user registration access control (physical location)

other methods, please specify:

For what purpose will personal data be processed?

The purpose of the research is to examine what the job search process is like for a Finn who is returning to Finland after living abroad and what kind of know-how Finnish expatriates gain and develop while living abroad.

Legal basis of processing personal data

A consent granted by the data subject.

If the legal basis is a consent granted by the data subject, You have the right to withdraw the consent at any time as described in this Privacy Notice.

Nature and duration of the research (how long will the personal data be processed):

- One-time research Follow-up research

Duration of the research:

September 2023 until April 2023 plus three years for possible reclamations about the research results and time needed to respond to them.

What happens to the personal data after the research has ended?

How the personal data will be processed after the research has ended:

- Any research materials containing personal data will be destroyed
 Any research materials containing personal data will be archived
 without identifiers
 with identifiers

Where the materials will be archived and for how long: On the researcher's personal computer, which is protected by a password.

Data transfer outside of research registry:

Your data will not be transferred outside the research group.

Possible transfer of personal data outside the EU or the EEA:

Your data will not be transferred outside of the EU or the EEA.

Your rights as a data subject

Because Your personal data will be used in this study, You will be registered to study registry. Your rights as a data subject are the following

- Right to obtain information on the processing of personal data
- Right of access
- Right to rectification
- Right to erasure (right to be forgotten)
- Right to withdraw the consent regarding processing of personal data
- Right to restriction of processing
- Notification obligation regarding rectification or erasure of personal data or restriction of processing
- Right to data portability
- The data subject can allow automated decision-making (including profiling) with his or her specific consent.
- Right to notify the Data Protection Ombudsman if you suspect that an organization or individual is processing personal data in violation of data protection regulations.

If the purposes for which a controller processes personal data do not or do no longer require the identification of a data subject by the controller, the controller shall not be obliged to maintain, acquire or process additional information in order to identify the data subject for the sole purpose of complying with this Regulation. If the controller cannot identify the data subject the rights of access, rectification, erasure, notification obligation and data portability shall not apply except if the data subject provides additional information enabling his or her identification.

You can exercise your rights by contacting the data controller of the study.

Personal data collected in this study will not be used for automated decision-making

In scientific research, the processing of personal data is never used in any decisions concerning the participants of the research.

Pseudonymisation and anonymisation

All information collected from you will be handled confidentially and according to the legislation. Individual participants will be given a code, and the data will be stored in a coded form in the research files. Results will be analyzed and presented in a coded, aggregate form. Individuals cannot be identified without a code key. A code key, which can be used to identify individual research participants and their responses, will be stored by researcher, and the data will not be given to people outside the research group. The final research results will be reported in aggregate form, and it will be impossible to identify individual participants. Research registry will be stored on researcher's computer for three years, after which it will be destroyed by deletion.

Researcher must inform the participant if the collected data will be used for later research (for example "The data collected from You can be later used in theses. The participant has the right to request information of people who have received data for their use"). If the legal basis for processing personal data has been consent and you wish to use the data in further studies, a specific consent for that must be received.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the study: Return expatriates' experiences with job search in Finland

Location of the study: Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

Researcher: Eeva Link, [REDACTED]

Supervisor: Heini Maisala-McDonnell, [REDACTED]

I _____ have been invited to participate in the above research study. The purpose of the research is to examine what the job search process is like for a Finn who is returning to Finland after living abroad and what kind of know-how Finnish expatriates gain and develop while living abroad.

I have read and understood the written participant information sheet. The information sheet has provided me sufficient information about above study, the purpose and execution of the study, about my rights as well as about the benefits and risks involved in it. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I have had sufficient information of the collection, processing and transfer/disclosure of my personal data during the study and the Privacy Notice has been available.

I have not been pressurized or persuaded into participation.

I have had enough time to consider my participation in the study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, without giving any reason. I am aware that if I withdraw from the study or withdraw my consent, any data collected from me before my withdrawal can be included as part of the research data.

By signing this form, I confirm that I voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

If the legal basis of processing personal data within this study is a consent granted by the data subject, by signing I grant the consent for process my personal data. I have right to withdraw the consent regarding processing of personal data as described in the Privacy Notice.

Date

Signature of Participant

The original consent signed by the participant and a copy of the participant information sheet will be kept in the records of the researcher. Participant information sheet, privacy notice and a copy of the signed consent will be given to the participant.