Employability of Foreign Graduate Students in Sweden and Finland: Attraction, Integration and Employment of International Graduates in National Labour Market

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The thesis focuses on the phenomenon of employability among foreign graduate students in Finland and Sweden and how it is supported by the national higher education and migration policies. To do that, the thesis aims to analyse how both countries attract foreign students to higher education institutions, what conditions they create for their successful integration to the local society and labour market and, finally, how well the foreign degree students get employed after graduation. In the theoretical part, the paper investigates the countries' policies and how they support or challenge the foreign students' employability. The empirical part represents the data collected through questionnaire.

As the result of the performed analysis, it is clear that both countries undergo similar processes in terms of internationalisation of higher education and, therefore, encounter comparable difficulties on the way of integration of the foreign students to the national market. However, student immigration regulations and higher education policies tend to be slightly more inclusive in Finland than in Sweden. The thesis also revealed that nearly all respondents considered an opportunity to sustain employment in the country, and despite a number of mentioned difficulties, the majority of the respondents managed to find employment within a short period of time. The reported satisfaction with employment is also quite high in both countries.

Overall, this thesis demonstrated a high capacity of both countries towards accepting and integrating international students what serves a good example of an inclusive labour environment - an integral part of the modern welfare states.

Keywords:
employability, foreign graduate students, student migration, labour market, integration, higher education, Finland, Sweden, welfare state

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1. Introduction

By the beginning of the 21th century, the global capitalist economy has become the major outcome of the global social and economic development. Driven by the general process of globalisation, the world economy leans toward the formation of common global market which implies free movement of capital, goods, services, and people. In this regard, the deliberate migration driven by economic motives and considerations constitute a separate and valuable subject for scientific research by a number of disciplines such as economic sociology and social anthropology. Considering the structural inequality between economically developed and yet developing countries within the global economy, it is fair to say that the developed countries gain a lot from skilled highly-educated workers from less developed regions (Chirot 1986). Generally, the global economy's sustainable growth and efficient management is to a vast extent impacted by free movement of human capital from developing to developed countries.

Since education is a major determining factor for wages in both home and destination countries (Dustmann and Glitz 2011), educational migration has taken a considerable place in the global migration structure. Between 2001 and 2019, the number of students studying abroad increased from 2,1 to 5,3 million (Institute of International Education 2019). Student migration has become a crucial point for elaborating specific kind of policies by many governments engaging their agencies and services to regulate student mobility, provide decent conditions for studies as well as for postgraduate employment.

The Finnish Ministry for Education and Culture acknowledges the importance of making Finland an attractive destination for international students, and for this reason, in 2009 it published the Strategy for the Internalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015 and later, in 2017, have developed a whole complex of policies to promote internalization in Finnish higher education and research focusing on the period of 2017-2025. Finland’s aspirations are in line with other regional partners. For example, in 2018, the Swedish government published their Strategic Agenda that also seeks to advance in the internationalization of higher education in the country (Swedish Government Official Report 2018). In Sweden’s Agenda, the internationalization of the higher education is acknowledged as the essential process which creates the need to integrate the triggered processes into education management practices. These examples demonstrate that the

aforementioned goal has not only been articulated by the respective governmental authorities but has also been practically implemented throughout the past decades.

The result of this implementation, first of all, is a great influx of international students in both countries: both on degree programs and outside. For example, in the year 2016, Finland hosted 21 000 foreign degree students, a number almost four times more than the 6 000 it hosted in the year 2000 (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018). These numbers, however, have faced a small decline in 2017 by 3%, as fewer non-EU/EEA students had made Finland a country of their preference. In general, despite the minor decrease in numbers, in 2017, the Finnish National Agency for Education indicated that the overall proportion of the foreign degree students in Finland was around 7%, which is higher than the average proportion in other OECD countries (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018).

In Sweden, the number of foreign students[1] in higher education institutions has remained stable since 2009. In 2016, approximately 23 500 of these students were studying in Sweden However, a considerable increase occurred resulting in approximately 62 300 in 2018 when the number was almost on the same level except for a small influx of 300 foreign students (Swedish Higher Education Authority 2019). In 2017 alone, the overall number of international students rose by approximately 5,4% thanks to the implementation of the Strategic Agenda resulting in increased non-EU/EEA student mobility. Such an increase clearly illustrates that the Strategic Agenda on Internationalization of Higher Education is being successfully implemented (Swedish Higher Education Authority 2018).

As the numbers continue to grow, the labour market also faces the consequence of growing internationalization and has also begun to internationalize since the majority of the students who graduated from a local higher education institution seek employment in the host country. This fact is another piece of evidence that validates the importance of the current research. Investigating the factors which determined the decision making of the foreign students in favour of Finland, International Student Barometer identifies that 78% of international degree students chose Finland as the country they want to get higher education in because of the opportunities to obtain a full time employment in this country

[1] Here, as in majority of statistical reports published by Swedish authorities, term “international student” includes both degree students, exchange students and free-movers.

upon the graduation (International Student Barometer 2016). Following the report from the Research Foundation for Studies and Education Otus, only 9% foreign graduate students from the EU/EEA (excluding Finland) and 37% students outside the EU/EEA who graduated in 2012-2013 left the country (The Research Foundation for Studies and Education Otus 2016). This indicates that the Finnish labour market had to open its doors to the international graduate students seeking employment after their graduation and local employers from now on could consider the international professionals during the process of recruitment.

However, according to the statistics from the recent OECD report, integration of foreign-born specialists into the Finnish labour market still faces some challenges: by 2018, the employment rate of the foreign-born workers was around 60% against approximately 75 % among native Finnish workers. The gap between employment rates tends to decrease in the majority of the EU countries: by 2018, the overall gap in all EU countries was around 5% which is 3 times less than in Finland. Similarly, comparable challenges affect the Swedish labour market as the employment rate gap between native and foreign-born workers is much higher than the overall rate in the EU, with 80% employment rate among local population against approximately 67% among foreign-born (OECD 2019). Important to keep in mind that foreign worker in this statistical outline is not an immediate foreign graduate student but rather a person born outside Sweden with no subsequent specifying characteristics (e.g. university degree, language skills, work experience) what makes this data quite a broad outlook on the current state of affairs in regard to labour integration of non-native employees.

1.1. Research problem

In 2000, the EU proclaimed innovative, knowledge-based society as the major factor for economic growth and social cohesion making good quality education a top priority in the agenda (European Council 2000). After the Bologna process was launched in 1999, the European universities were required to raise a link between the study programs and labour market and by that to establish study objectives directly connected to the further employability of their students (Wiepcke 2009). As a result, European universities started implementing Bologna process strategy on linking university education with labour

market needs, therefore the question of university graduates' employability gained special visibility and importance.

Hence, in this thesis, I am focusing on the phenomenon of employability in regard to foreign nationals graduated from Finnish and Swedish universities and how it correlates to the current higher education and migration policies. It was decided to focus on graduates[2] from Sweden and Finland due to close geographical and historical proximity of the countries, a similar level of the economic development and high priority of internationalisation of higher education in the educational agenda. **The concept of employability** is a complex of interrelated features, and in this particular work I use the following definition of employability introduced by the Bologna process: "the ability to gain initial employment, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market" (The Bologna Process 2020). The given definition represents employability as a construct built up by three main elements: **gaining the employment, maintaining it and finally moving within the labour market**. Here, I will mostly analyse the first two components since the focus group of the thesis scopes young specialists who have recently graduated and therefore cannot provide a proper expectation of being promoted on the positions they occupy. Moreover, these elements are easier to measure and examine from a quantitative approach what will be done in the second part of the thesis.

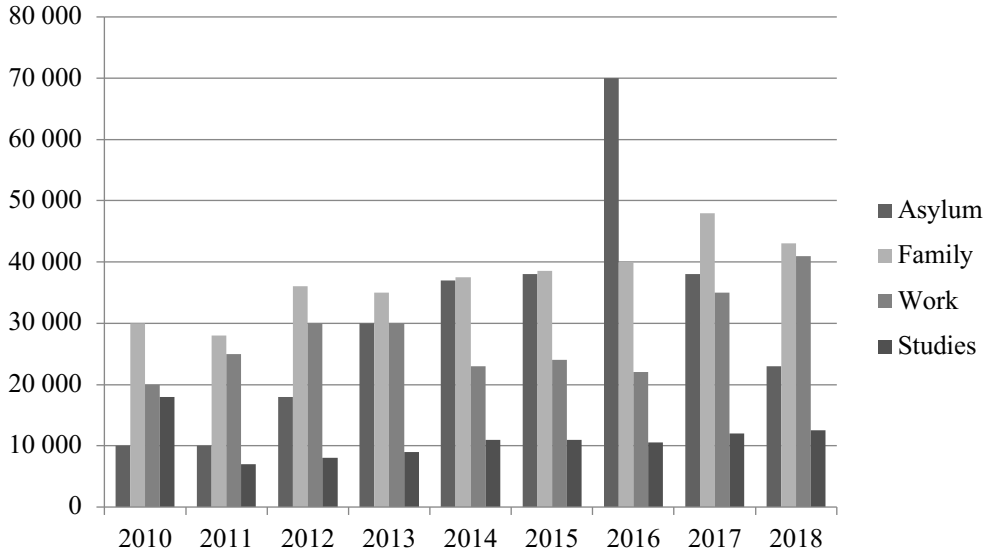
Since the thesis investigates employability of foreign graduate students, it is necessary to agree on what is understood by the term **foreign student**. Foreign students or international students, according to the OECD glossary of statistical terms, are "persons admitted by a country other than their own, usually under special permits or visas, for the specific purpose of following a particular course of study in an accredited institution of the receiving country" or, in other words, are "**students who do not hold the citizenship of the country for which the data are collected**" (OECD 2003). Unless further specified, generic term like that will be adopted for the purposes of this thesis. The reason behind that roots in the fact that the statistical reports published by the national authorities of Finland and Sweden have a different understanding of the term (e.g. when using the term, reports from Sweden most often speak about international degree students, exchange students and free-movers while the data from Finland reflects degree and

[2] In this thesis, under a "graduate" I understand an individual who graduated from a higher education institution with either Bachelor's or Master's degree

exchange students unless specified). In other words, in this thesis, all students who are not citizens of the reporting country (both from EU/EEA and outside) and who are enrolled in a higher education institution in Finland or Sweden are considered as international students.

As mentioned previously, the influx of foreign nationals both in Finland and Sweden continues to grow, and the employment rate gap between foreign born and native workers is approximately on the same level and much higher than overall in all EU countries. However, the data does not specify the percentage of university degree holders among those who are unemployed. Apparently, the international migration in both countries has multiple patterns, and there is no immediate connection between foreign-born job seeker and foreign-born graduate student. The statistics published by the Swedish Migration Agency evidences that there are four main categories of residence permits in Sweden: family reunification, work, asylum and studies, and proportions among them vary depending on a year. Thus, in 2016 asylum-seeking was the most frequent ground for granting residence permit in Sweden making nearly 50% of all residence permits granted with 17% permits granted for work and 7,8% for studies respectively. In 2018, the situation, however, changed dramatically: 36% of residence permits was granted for family reunification reasons, 33% on work basis, 20% for asylum-seekers and only 11% for studies (Migrationsverket 2020). The Figure 1 illustrates how the proportions between four major residence permit types varied each year.

Figure 1. Granted residence permits 2010-2018



Source: Migrationsverket, 2020

NB: the figure only reflects the statistics of non-EU citizens who are required to have a residence permit prior to their arrival to the country

The statistics on migration to Finland also varies from year to year. In 2016, 39% residence permits were granted for family reunification, 29% for studies, 29% for work and 3% for other, non-specified reasons. But in 2019 the picture was slightly different: 41% of family reunification residence permits, 39% work permits, 18% study residence permits with just 2% permits for other categories (Maahanmuuttovirasto 2020).

The numbers stated above clearly demonstrate that 1) the overall study migration rate in Finland is higher than in Sweden; 2) proportions between different residence permit types in Finland are more even than in Sweden as the trendline is mild. Also, as pointed out before, it is important not to put an equality mark between categories "foreign-born job-seekers" and "foreign-born university graduates" though in some context they might overlap.

1.2. Research aim and questions

Since the major **aim** of the thesis is to see how Sweden and Finland promote internationalisation of higher education, implement it and how well graduate students in these countries integrate into the labour market, I intend to answer these **research questions**:

- to what extent do the national educational and migration policies stimulate foreign students to arrive to Sweden and Finland for completing degree studies and how the situation has been developing over time;

- what labour integration services do both countries offer to the international graduate students to help them better integrate into the local labour market;

- what are the most popular reasons for choosing Sweden and Finland as the countries for degree studies;

- how are employed and non-employed respondents distributed in both countries;

- what is the human capital impact on employability;

- how the respondents experience and evaluate their employment and their satisfaction with it

In the first part, I will use the open statistical data, official reports from both countries and base the comparative part both on quantitative and qualitative data. In the final part I will focus on data collected from the recent foreign-born alumni from Finnish and Swedish universities.

1.3. Thesis design

To answer abovementioned questions, it was decided to design the thesis following the classic IMRaD structure (Introduction, Methodology, Results and Discussion) which is commonly used in social sciences with quantitative or mixed methods. As the result, the thesis is arranged as follows.

Generic introduction which represents the topic, research aim and questions is the first major part that delineates the general idea and makes an overview of the thesis. The second major chapter following the introductory part is dedicated to the literature review and methodology overview. Consisting of the sub-chapters, it introduces, firstly, the review of the existing literature investigating related topics such as:

- Reasons for choosing Finland as a destination for university studies;
- Employability of graduate students in Finland, Sweden and other countries that accept many international students each year;
- Major challenges international degree students have on the way of gaining employment and their experience of seeking one;
- Factors affecting international students' employability;

The literature analysis helps to gain a better understanding of the studied phenomena and relate to a wider context so that it becomes more clear what other researchers have managed to identify in the course of the recent years that could be used for research purposes. Also, it provides with different approaches the problem can be studied from and familiarises with the methodological and conceptual frameworks that are commonly used in this academic field.

The literature review is followed by the methodological sub-chapter that introduces the data collection methodology as well as data analysis methodology. Alongside with the primary sources' analysis, the data for the fourth chapter of the thesis is collected through the questionnaire. Therefore, in this sub-chapter the questionnaire design is introduced, as well as the categories of included questions, their aim and meaning for the current research. To interpret the collected data there needs to be implemented an appropriate theoretic approach which I am discussing in the respective sub-chapter. Finally, in a concluding sub-chapter I am introducing the limitations that I was aware of on the stage of thesis-writing before data collection and analysis and which I tried to avoid and if not possible – to mitigate.

The third, analytical chapter contains the overview and the analysis of the migration and education policies both in Finland and Sweden as well as an outline of the existing integration services aimed at foreign nationals in both countries. In this chapter, the most emphasis is put on primary sources such as laws, texts of reforms and statistics. This chapter is designed to support the text of the thesis with evidence on the official framework of the discussed processes and illustrate them more clearly with numbers that could help better understand the scale of the studied phenomena. The chapter consists of six sub-chapters: 1) Development of higher educational policy in Sweden; 2) Overview of student migration policy in Sweden; 3) Overview of the labour market integration services for foreign students in Sweden; 4) Development of higher educational policy in Finland; 5) Overview of student migration policy in Finland; 6) Overview of the labour market integration services for foreign students in Finland. Each of them contains statistical data presented in form of charts, graphs and tables.

The fourth part provides the presentation of the data collected through the questionnaires. The chapter is a combination of the quantitative and qualitative data presentation with its analysis. There, the major focus is laid on the gathered responses as well as scaled rates and proportions. Therefore, the graphic component plays even greater role in this chapter.

The final part is responsible for discussion. In this thesis, the key findings from all chapters are represented and summarised. Alongside with it, limitations of the thesis are reviewed to show what, unfortunately, the thesis couldn't cover. Relying on the findings and limitations, major suggestions for further research on a related topic are introduces. The brief conclusion finalizes the thesis; the appendix with the questionnaire forms for both countries is also included.

2. Methodological Framework

2.1. Literature review

Despite the fact that the labour market is a constantly developing structure which creates a quite essential need of relevant and the newest data, the topic is well covered in Finnish academia as there has been found a plenty of research investigating this problem. The situation with research in Sweden, however, is less advantageous, and the process of data collecting for this work, in general, has been far more complicated.

The question of employability of foreign graduate students in Finland has been raised long time ago, and already in 2003 when the number of foreign residents was much lower than in 2019 (approximately 13 000 immigrants registered in 1997 against 31 000 in 2018) (Statistics Finland 2020). Career Services of the University of Helsinki have published a survey on the employment of foreign graduate students with data focusing on those who graduated in 1997-1999. Interestingly, it was reported that about 40% of the respondents were feeling discrimination over their nationality and found it generally difficult to find a job being a foreigner (Pulkkinen 2003).

Since then, the investigation of this topic has been progressing, and in 2005 there has been published a report on what international degree students think of Finland as a place to study, work and live (Kärki 2005). The report identified the reasons why international students chose Finland as the destination for their studies, how well they managed their studies, what were the major advantages of their education as well as the major challenges on their way to employment. Worth to note, in 2005, when this report was published, most students (approximately 60%) named free education as one of the cornerstones of arriving to Finland giving the third priority to possible career perspectives opening after graduation out of 10 possible reasons. Regarding the challenging factors on the way to employment, one quarter of the respondents reported being discriminated over their nationality and named lack of language proficiency, poor network and lack of relevant work experience as three biggest obstacles.

Speaking of obstacles challenging the employment of foreign graduate students, in 2010 Vehaskari published a research investigating the way of bridging between recent university graduates of foreign origin and local employers in order to reduce the size of lost talent for the Finnish labour market. Thus, among others, he highlighted the following

most common reasons the employers are losing beneficial talents on a regular basis: language bareer (i.e. lack of Finnish/ Swedish language proficiency), complicated /restrictive bureaucracy (e.g. complicated bureaucratic procedure of obtaining a residence permit for non-EU citizens after completion of their studies), closed professional network, family integration and social network and finally, limited career options. There, he also mentioned that, in general, the employer's attitude towards foreign graduate students is negative which also challenges the latter during the job-hunting process (Vehaskari 2010).

In 2010, Puhakka has also investigated the problem of employability of Finnish graduate students with no clear focus on their place of origin, where he concluded that massification of higher education has led to students getting higher education only to be able to find a decent employment upon graduation as the number of sectors requiring university degree from their employees is currently increasing. There, he also claimed that the aim of all EU higher education institutions, at this point, is to "tighten the bonds between educational systems and the labour market" (Puhakka, Rautopuro and Tuominen 2010)

Ciulinaru in 2010 has also dedicated his paper to investigating foreign student's experiences during job seeking and actual employment with a focus on their biggest struggles and opportunities during their integration to labour market and generally in Finland. His paper was based on the data collected through the interviews, and therefore presented a more qualitative approach. As the result, he stressed the importance of good quality integration services that will help both international students and Finnish society benefit from the internationalisation of higher education. Also, the majority of the respondents admitted that higher Finnish language proficiency would help the majority of the international students in Finland to gain employment. Therefore, a more flexible offer of language courses, according to the report, should improve the employment situation. Moreover, the author also concluded that it is extremely important to provide the students with sufficient amount of relevant information regarding the local labour market as it will help the students build more realistic expectation and, in general, manage the situation better (Ciulinaru 2010).

In 2011, concerned with the current state of affairs with the employability of foreign students in Finland, Majakulma published an article investigating the ways of enhancing students' employability during their studies. Among other suggestions, he mentioned the

importance of stressing the need of learning Finnish and/or Swedish language during the studies and creating a variety of ways the students can engage with Finnish culture and work culture, in particular. For this reason, he emphasised the importance of work placements and internships and participation in career counselling to familiarise students with Finnish working culture, ways of gaining employment and to equip them with the most essential working skills (Majakulma 2011).

The problem of foreign alumni satisfying the needs of national labour market was studied by Cai in 2012. In his paper, he interviewed the Finnish companies in China to present an overview of the reasons why they would like or would not like to hire Chinese professionals educated in Finland. Analysing on employer's perspective, he came up with conclusion that education can either increase skills necessary for further employment or signal the student's capabilities to the employer (Cai 2012).

In 2014, Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) published a survey of Finnish Higher Education Institutions basing on data collected by the Student Barometer. In this paper, the data was focused on identifying the satisfaction level of students with their education in Finland, services provided by universities and other stakeholders, accessibility of some benefits, etc. The report identified that among reasons for choosing Finland as the destination for studies, the respondents named cost of education, quality of research and the reputation of the institution as the most important criteria they were basing their decisions on and approximately 80% students named opportunity to gain full time employment following the studies as a factor affecting their decision-making. After the studies, absolute majority of the respondents (20%) said they are interested in being engaged in a full-time employment in Finland. However, they also named the following three major obstacles on their way to the employment: employers' low interest in foreign employees (46%), poor career opportunities in the field of studies (45%), language barrier (42%) (International Student Barometer 2014).

Interesting comparative perspective has been brought up by Lindberg in his article where he was assessing integration and employability of graduate students in nine European countries: Italy, Spain, France, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, the UK, Finland and Norway. He analysed the statistics on employability of recent graduates from these countries as well as implemented a comparative approach when he investigated how the perception of employability changes under cross-sectional and longitudinal viewpoint. He came up with conclusion that most research on graduates' employability should be

more careful with assumptions as the individual factors that are most often not taken into consideration can matter even more than such factors as degree, field of studies, age, etc. What is also important in conducting such kind of research is to be able to measure not only the quality of employment itself but also the quality of participation of the international graduate students (Lindberg 2007).

When discussing the foreign graduate students in country Z, it is important to review the factors affecting their choice of the country Z in favour of others. Exploring the problem of the university choice-making among foreign students in the United States, Elder, Smith and Pitts analysed it through the lens of three push (personal growth, language, career) and pull factors (college issues, physical geography, local culture). After interviewing the students and reviewing the data, the researchers have concluded that only 29% of the respondents identified push factors as most important in making up their choice. Among push factors, the respondents rated personal growth and language practice as the most popular factors affecting their choice, giving the third place to the importance for their future career. However, 55,9% of the responses marked pull factors as more important in their choice-making with the following rated in the order of decreasing importance: college matters, physical geography and local culture. (Elder, Wayne and Pitts 2010).

The problem of employment of younger people in Sweden was covered by Åsa Olli Segendorf in her book *Unga i arbete i Norden. Ungas väg mot etablering på arbetsmarknaden i de nordiska länderna* [Young people at work in the Nordic countries. Young people's road to establishment in the labour market in the Nordic countries] (2013). In this book, she compares the statistical evidence between five Nordic countries on such aspects as education and employment where young people are organised in certain age groups (e.g. 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34 years old). She acknowledges that relatively high short-term unemployment rate among young people is a common challenge for Nordic countries which is, in its turn, still lower than on average in OECD countries but long-term unemployment rate is quite low (Segendorf 2013).

Even though study migration scopes people moving to another country for study purposes, when the graduates obtain job in the country of their studies, they start being classified as labour migrants. The phenomenon of labour migration is closely related to the question of the thesis and therefore worth discussing here. How labour migration has affected the labour market in Sweden especially in the face of its continuous growth was the question studied in the book *Arbetskraftsinvandring till Sverige* –

befolkningsutveckling, arbetsmarknad i förändring, internationell utblick [Labour immigration to Sweden: population trends, labour market change, international outlook] issued by the Labour Immigration Committee in 2005. The authors stress the importance of migration on shaping the society and economy and admit that in the context of the global ageing of the working population migration can help mitigate its negative consequences. However, they also discuss that the steps to making Sweden more open towards labour migration should be implemented carefully as it can also lead to negative side-effects (Kommittén för arbetskraftsinvandring 2005).

The mechanisms of integration of the immigrants to the labour market in Sweden are researched by Pieter Bevelander and Nahikari Irastorza. They highlight the various background of the recently arriving immigrants to Sweden and how it affects their employment, i.e. family immigrants are more likely to lack country-specific skills that prevents them from finding a job. However, the researchers have managed to identify that with time, the employment rates of newly-arrived immigrants have improved, incomes have risen and in general they established more firm positions on the labour market (Bevelander and Irastorza 2014).

Relatively similar responses have been discussed by Nillson in 2016 when he investigated the expectations of international students from the perspective of their further employability. Relying upon data collected by the Student Barometer, he has analysed how international experience affected future students' employability, how students' expectations were met in the labour market upon their graduation and, finally, how different the situation in Europe is from the rest of the world. The Student Barometer responses that he was basing his research on showed that the students rank the following factors as the most important in their decision-making in favour of a particular country: quality of education (72% responses), improving career prospects (69%), broadening experience (67%), improving language skills (64%). Interesting to note that the results of this study is drastically different to the one illustrated by Elder, Smith and Pitts (Elder, Wayne and Pitts 2010) where absolute majority of the respondents identified pull factors being more important than push factors. The results from both surveys, however, focus on choice-making among students going abroad for exchange studies and not those going abroad for degree studies. Therefore, the statistics on destination choice among graduate students should be slightly different from the one above.

Following the data collected by the researchers from VALOA project investigating foreign graduates' employability in Finland, it can be seen that the factors' priority differs significantly. Thus, the respondents have identified the following four factors as the ones that have turned their decision in favour of Finland: free education (71,6% responses), possibility to study in English (61,2%), a chance to improve employability (43,3%) and an opportunity to explore a foreign country (43,3%) (Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola 2012). From these results, it is clear that the decisive factor is free education that was available for non-EU students until 2016 when Finland introduced tuition fees for this category of students. Free education is still available across the Europe including Finland for EU citizens. However, by the time this research was published only 28% of international students were coming from EU countries which means that the statistics have now changed. Therefore, decision-making in favour of Finland is now also dictated by other factors. So, in the questionnaire for the recent graduates, there is a question on factors that determined students' decision to come to study in Finland so that it is possible to see how different the responses will be from the ones presented in VALOA-project.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I am aiming to provide a brief overview of the concepts used in this paper, how the concepts have been used in other research articles and what should be seen behind these terms in this particular case.

2.2.1. Internationalisation of higher education

Since late 20th century globalisation has been penetrating different spheres of life, and education was no exception. Massively increased exchange between countries resulted into establishment of widely interconnected world. Intensified flow of goods and peoples in turn affected the educational niche and developed into, what some researchers might call an "academic revolution" (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley 2009), the phenomenon of internationalisation of education.

Altbach, at the same time, suggests keeping apart the terms "globalisation" and "internationalisation" of education, and argues that the consequences the globalisation bring to the academic sphere are the following:

- Global research integration;

- Wide use of English as lingua franca for academic communication;
- Constantly expanding international labour market for academics;
- Large use of information technology

However, both, globalisation and internationalisation tend to favour well-developed education models and countries, concentrate wealth in the arms of those already possessing them and therefore, strengthen the existing inequalities (Altbach and Knight 2007).

Investigating the phenomenon of internationalisation in all its complexity, Knight stresses the confusion in its definition, and how this confusion is reflected in the academic research. She emphasizes how the perception of this term changed through the years in the academia, and how these changes indicated the evolution of the concept. Generally, she draws a line between proposed in 1990s definition as "the multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation" (Arum S., van de Water J. 1992, 202) to what she proposed herself as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight 2003).

In 2017, Wihlborg and Robson discussed the most current state of affairs in regard to the academic perception of the internationalisation and came up with conclusion that despite a major positive attitude towards this phenomenon, very little empirical research has been done on the challenges the internationalisation brings to the development of higher education in Europe. The critique mostly touches upon internationalisation in the context of the changing political map and how its social role can answer the needs of the changing world. And, what is more, some researchers are also critical of particular policies and programmes such as acknowledged hegemony of English and market-driven approaches to global education (Wihlborg and Robson 2017).

Knowing the academic discourse around the phenomenon of the internationalisation of higher education helps to better understand the national policies on higher education internationalisation address and the overall context around this topic. Moreover, it is advisable to be aware of the existing blank fields in the research on this topic so that this thesis could at least partly answer the current needs.

2.2.2. Student migration

Since the thesis is focusing on international students, it is essential to analyse the phenomenon of *student immigration* in the context of global academic education. According to the definition given by the International Organization for Migration, migration is "– The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State" (IOM 2020). Normally, migration can be divided into two major categories: emigration and immigration. Emigration, according to the IOM glossary, is the movement of an individual or a group of individuals from the country of their origin to another country from the perspective of the country of departure. Immigration is, on the contrary, the movement of people to country different than the country of the origin from the perspective of the receiving country.

Also, depending on legitimacy, the migration can also be divided into regular and irregular where the first one is the movement of people that happens under the rule of law of both sending and receiving country, irregular migration, as it follows from the term, is happening against the laws of sending and/or receiving country (IOM 2020). Student migration, therefore, is only one of multiple possible pathways of regular migration together with family re-unification, labour migration and others.

In academic research, student migration is usually associated with "knowledge migration", and therefore is considered as one of the driving forces of economic growth in receiving countries since it not only brings new qualified specialists but also urges migrants coming through one of others pathways acquire skills in order to be liable on the labour market, and despite the different initial reason for leaving country A and settling in country B, studies become an overarching activity for all kinds of migrants (Parvati 2012).

Migration researchers are quite careful when using the term "student migration" as it is often confused with the term "student mobility". Despite both terms being inter-related, they do signify slightly different phenomena. Thus, it is generally accepted behind "student mobility" to understand short-duration and sometimes short-distance movements of students to other countries that are usually embedded in their study curriculum. In other words, word "mobility" in this term preconditions the subject of movement is going to come back to the sending country. "Student migration", on the other hand, is commonly used to describe a more long-distance and long-duration

movements of students that are aiming to obtain a degree abroad. The "migration" part of the term, in its turn, does not imply that the subject of action is aiming to come back to the receiving county, its final destination, as it follows, is unknown. For this reason, student migration is often linked to the phenomenon of brain drain (King, R., Findlay, A. 2012).

2.2.3. Employability

Quite generic definition of *employability* is given in Erasmus Mundus report, according to which employability is the complex of various factors that allow a person gain employment, keep it and advance in his/her career development. In case of student employability, it is the transition process from studies to work, the set of skills and competences that make this transition possible, the position the graduate is aiming to get and the position that he/she finally gets (European Commision 2011). Fair to notice that this definition falls under the one given by the Bologna process. Generally speaking, most of the research on similar topic that has been using the concept of employability determine this concept as it follows from the Bologna process definition. However, this concept cannot be perceived as a static phenomenon of possessing the necessary skills. In order to have a relevant expertise and up-to-date qualification, education implies being a life-long process of acquiring, maintaining and updating the competence that ensures an individual's employability. Therefore, when researching employability, it is very important to bear in mind the ever-changing nature of this phenomenon and highlight the ways the universities are dealing with it from the educational and non-educational perspectives (e.g. how the educational course reflect it or how relevant services help students remain employable in the constantly shifting market).

Despite a wide attraction of the phenomenon from the research and policy perspective, there still has not been reached a consensus among employability researchers in understanding the set of skills determining if the employability is going to be successful or not. The most universal approach has been demonstrated in the paper by Mittelstaedt and Wiepcke where they link employability to two separate skill clusters: soft skills and business skills (Mittelstaedt and Wiepcke 2007), i.e. interpersonal and knowledge-based skills. Among most common soft skills often named by employers as desired ones are motivation, ability to learn quickly, personal resilience, ability to work in team and independently, proactive attitude and others. However, the majority of the employers consider networking (i.e. ability to communicate and exchange information within

different networks) as the most important skill and method of embracing and developing the soft skills. Therefore, networking is sometimes considered as the part of soft skills and sometimes it is treated individually. Business skills, on the other hand, are the skills that are quite beneficial for some market areas or individual businesses. Among them Mittelstaedt and Wiepcke specify methodological skills (i.e. knowledge how to handle things) and skills on their practical implementation. Also, some employers have been recently setting value to something that researchers refer to as intrapreneurship or, in other words, entrepreneurial thinking that is expected to bring about new business opportunities to the employer (Wiepcke 2009). Employers' perspective on the research question provides with a useful approach on the studied phenomenon and allows us to look differently on the reasons why respondents of a particular profile have been successful or unsuccessful in gaining employment.

Throughout the past decades, the European Commission in its higher education agenda has been explicitly stressing the link between higher education and labour market as the universities are expected to raise top quality specialists that are going to fill the needs of the market and form the skeleton of the future knowledge-based society. In other words, the university graduates' employability is labelled to be the universities' objective and responsibility. Despite the global widening of higher education, Bologna Process official statements have been stressing this responsibility and appointing universities as the main actors in reducing the gap between higher education and labour market. Thus, London Communique (2007), Leuven & Louvain-la-Neuve Communique (2009) and Berlin Communique (2013) highlight that apart from academic competences the university are responsible for providing their students with the skills and knowledge that is going to make them employable upon graduation.

There is no doubt that the question of qualification and quality of education mainly depends on the higher education institution the job-seekers come from. At the same time, when taking into account the shifting nature of the labour market needs, it becomes more difficult to claim that universities should be responsible for student (un-)employment. Discussing the effect precarious employment has on career development showcasing Australia, Julia Connell and John Burgess propose that the job-seekers themselves are responsible for acquiring the skills that will help them obtain and maintain the employment. Since the global market is always in the process of major and minor transformation, the education becomes a life-long process. They stress that the career

development nowadays becomes more "boundaryless" what in turn obliges the employees to be responsible for remaining competitive on the labour market. Therefore, according to them, individual's employability depends on the individual's readiness to go through training and education repetitively (Connell and Burgess 2006).

In 2003, researching the effect education has on global economy, Philip Brown has come to the conclusion that in the context of global widening of education, the higher education becomes less valuable and therefore can no longer guarantee employment. For this reason, it starts to be a personal responsibility of every individual job-seeker to gain employment. In the "opportunity trap" that most countries are facing now (especially the ones following Anglo-Saxon model) the problem of employment is rather conditioned by the "positional conflict" and the social inequalities. They prevent ones from winning in the never-ending competence competition due to their limited opportunities to access the benefits (e.g. tough-entry schools) that, in a long run, determines the result of the competition or, putting it otherwise, gaining employment. However, analysing the roots of this complex phenomenon, he stresses that the problem is not only visible on the individuals' level, it rather roots in conflicting relationships between capitalism and democracy. He also argues that the global widening of education, in his opinion, is not going to result into global equality of opportunities (Brown 2003). Looking from this perspective on the problem of international graduates' employability and therefore taking into consideration the positional differences of local students and international ones, it can easily be concluded that the latter category will be less privileged as they will have much more limited access to local services that can help gain employment, they have to build up a network from the ground and they can simply lack knowledge on employment opportunities and struggles. These factors can significantly challenge their integration and complicate job-seeking.

2.2.4. Human capital

In the discussion of higher education contributing to making university graduates look more attractive in the eyes of employers, it is important to mention *human capital theory* (HCT) widely implemented by the researchers of employability. According to the OECD definition, human capital is "the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being" (OECD 2007). Generally speaking, through the lens of the human capital theory, higher education is represented as the individual's and governmental investment that is expected

to bring more value in future (G. Becker 1964). In other words, the more qualified the individual is, the greater chances he has for further employment, and hence greater impact his employment will make on forming the innovative society. However, in the context of discussion the employability of foreign graduate students it is important to mention that the skills assembling human capital of foreign and local graduates are quite different, and therefore research literature suggests to provide a distinction between country-specific and general human capital (Wiers-Jenssen 2008) to be able to present a more accurate analysis of international employment. According to country-specific human capital theorists, some labour markets can value more the skills such as language skills, cultural skills and professional, knowledge-based skills adapted to the realia of local market (Støren, L.; Wiers-Jenssen, J. 2010). Speaking otherwise, these are the skills that local students have and the foreign students are expected to have by the time of their graduation so while some are sceptical towards the equality of employment chances for local and international graduates, others argue that the latter ones can significantly benefit from their position as they can develop a broad range of skills that can be extremely valuable in terms of further employment such as "intercultural communication skills", "understanding and respect for global issues", "ability to handle ambiguity", "improved personal and professional self-image" and others (Salisbury, Umbach and Paulsen 2009).

For this reason, education is considered to be the most crucial one on the way of empowering human capital, and therefore the level of education is often linked to higher probability of professional success as well as the study subject and the educational institution one graduated from. However, there is no evidence of a direct link between level of education and the payback after one's graduation. Discussing the essence of human capital theory, Gary Becker highlighted a huge variety of phenomena that can illustrate the basic principles of this theory which are:

- the size of income grows with age at a decreasing rate with the latter positively related to the level of skill. Unemployment rate, according to him, is also linked to level of skills;
- employers in underdeveloped countries tend to be more "paternalistic" towards their employees rather than those in developed countries;
- younger people receive more on-the-job training rather than older people as they tend to change jobs more often;

- the more capable person is, the more training he or she is going to receive afterwards;
- the labour division is significantly limited by the extent of markets;
- those investing in human capital tend to be more impulsive, and therefore are more likely to make mistakes than those investing in tangible capital (G. Becker 1975).

In 2012, analysing the employment experiences of Chinese students who graduated from Finnish universities, Cai proposed an opposition of the ways HCT and signalling theory treat education and employment. Signalling theory, according to Cai, claims that education only helps to signal employers the job-seekers ability (Cai 2012). He also mentions there has been quite limited research written on signalling international education on different labour markets and referred to Wiers-Jenssen who analysed the employment of Norwegian graduates who completed their education abroad. He came up with conclusion that signalling of foreign education can be quite poor in case it is not well known to the employers (Wiers-Jenssen 2008).

A problem appears how to estimate the HCT's ability to serve as a theoretical framework in explaining certain socio-economic phenomena deriving from recent years' manifestations of economic recession. For example, the theory to some extent is applicable to studying so-called overeducation and overskilling[3]. Surely, the HCT should not perform as the only conceptual instrument for researching employability and labour mismatch but to be combined with other elaborations, e.g. career/job mobility or signalling theories. Nevertheless, the notion of human capital could be a valuable theoretical resource able to scope all factors making a student more competitive on the Nordic labour market. For that reason, the *concept of human capital* as a characteristic (or, at least, the name) of employability factors as *it is described by HC theorists* will be used. A reservation to be made there is that in the present work HCT is being used in its sociological, not economic aspect. All this would provide a good theoretical grounding to this mostly empirical thesis.

[3] On various theoretical interpretations of overeducation including the HCT perspective, see Capsada-Munsech (2017)

2.3. Methodology

To make current research representative and reliable, the huge considerations should be made regarding the methodology the work is going to rely upon. Since this paper aims to see how successful recent foreign graduates in Finland and Sweden in terms of employment are, systematic data collection is the crucial stage of the thesis-writing. Methodological issues are of key importance and they are not always simple issues but connected to theoretical assumptions and conceptual definitions. Research methods can, however, be simplified and categorized into two groups of quantitative and qualitative methods and a mixture of those two.

Quantitative research methods focus on numeric data and aim to provide quantitative-based reasoning of a particular phenomenon, i.e. represent objective, statistical explanation. The data for such kind or research is normally collected through questionnaires or surveys and is supposed to be a representative of a particular focus group. Therefore, this method is usually associated with wide-scale generalizations and categorization. In other words, this type of research is suitable when the paper is aiming to explore how many people are in category A, B or C (Gray, et al. 2007, 42).

Qualitative research method, on the contrary, collects evidence to find answers to a particular question that were not predetermined and seeks an explanation of a particular phenomenon outside the statistical paradigm. This research method can help understand the complexity of the studied subject and include into the research the minor factors that can be extracted in the process of generalisation under a quantitative research. Qualitative data can be collected through interviews and observations, and generally are less representative than quantitative data (Gray, et al. 2007, 42).

Mixed methods are the third research method that combines elements of both quantitative and qualitative research. This allows a researcher to investigate the problem in its breadth and depth by using a mix of both statistical questionnaires and more individually-tailored interviews. Such approach helps to study the problem from different angles and provide multi-level reasoning (Gray, et al. 2007, 42).

Since the choice of research method comes from the target the paper is aiming to reach, the research strategy should naturally be able to meet the research objectives. Therefore, this paper is going to use a mixed method, as the data collected through the questionnaire

is going to be generalized in order to provide a statistical insight to the researched phenomenon but will also include a non-statistical approach and answer to the question from a more individualistic perspective. This is going to be achieved by a specially designed questionnaire that will include both category-based and open questions. Mixed method will help us generalization-based conclusion as well as to include less popular factors in its agenda.

2.3.1. Data collection

As mentioned above, data for this thesis has been collected through questionnaires that have both close-ended and open questions. After the questionnaire has been designed, it was transferred to an online survey platform Webropool that did not have any restrictions regarding the number of questions and the length of the survey. Therefore, it gave freedom, and the questionnaire could fully answer the needs of the paper.

Among close-ended questions the questionnaire included those where a respondent had to choose an answer from the list of categories that will most fully correspond with his/her situation (either one category or several). Despite close-ended questions making up a major part of the questionnaire, there has also been a cluster of open-ended questions that varied by their complexity. Some of open-ended questions asked the respondents to identify their country of origin and first language, answer to such questions can easily be articulated by one word. Some questions in this category were more complex and required a more voluminous answer. These questions are responsible for collecting qualitative data for this paper, as they would ask the respondents opinion on a particular subject, e.g. what helped them gain employment in the host country.

Very few questions can be considered as personal such as gender, year of birth and country of origin. These questions do not aim to identify the respondents but to provide a different approach to the collected data so that on the stage of data analysis it would be possible to form categories based on gender and country of origin and see how responses differ.

Second cluster of the questionnaire is designed to access the information about respondents' studies either in Finland or Sweden. In particular it is aimed at learning their level of studies, academic field, language of instruction and other details.

Third part is dedicated to the respondents' employment and therefore has questions about its specific features such as previous work experience, type of current contract if employment takes place (full-time, part-time, fixed term contract), place of employment and approximate duration of the job-seeking process after graduation.

This is followed by another set of questions on the overall satisfaction with the current employment. Here, the respondents are asked to evaluate on a numeric scale their satisfaction with the job duties, the salary and to compare it to the average in this field. Also, some questions are aimed to identify how much the employment corresponds with the respondents' level and field of the studies. Such approach will help recognize potential overskilling, overeducation or undereducation as well as field-of-study mismatch.

Lastly, the respondents are asked to leave free-form comments on their own opinion on the existing employment, if it falls under their expectations and what advice they could give to the current international students to help their employment after graduation.

After the research has been completed, it has been sent out to the current graduate students from several Swedish universities (Lund University, Gothenburg University, Uppsala University) and Finnish universities (Turku university, Helsinki university and others). It includes both EU and Non-EU citizens that have been born outside Finland or Sweden and have a first language that is different from Finnish and/ or Swedish. The questionnaires have been distributed by means of different social media platforms as well as by email to individuals' email accounts.

The questionnaires were sent through a personal network what already on the initial stage restricts the capacity of the thesis to provide with quantitative data analysis. At first, the form has been sent out to 19 Finnish respondents and 20 Swedish respondents, and then these individuals' have been asked to distribute it further what, in total, resulted into the response rate 22 for Finland and 21 for Sweden respectively. In this context, the response rate among the approached individuals is quite high due to the fact it is the personal network what probably will be more difficult to achieve in case the questionnaire will be distributed in a different way.

The collected answers have been processed anonymously and only for the purposes of this Master thesis, the results will be mostly reviewed statistically so it will not be possible to identify the respondents. No third parties have had access to this data. The respondents

have been informed on the purpose of the questionnaire they are asked to fill in as well as on the research objectives of this Master thesis. Since the personal identification is not dictated by the research purposed, the respondents have not been asked to leave any personal information except for the one mentioned above.

2.4. Limitations

During the process of data collection, there have been encountered several obstacles that have made the process more complicated and time-consuming. It was initially planned to liaise with universities in Finland and Sweden and make use of the student registers the university keep. However, after several attempts to approach the universities, it became clear that there should be urgently found a different way of collecting data. In Finland, the following list of institutions has been contacted: University of Turku, Helsinki University, Tampere University and Tampere University of Applied Sciences. It came to my knowledge that the university was either not keeping a register of the recent alumni or the register would not have any relevant contacts for this research. For the Swedish part, the following universities have been approached: Lund University, Stockholm University, Gothenburg University, Uppsala University and Umea University. However, the attempts were unsuccessful as all the institutions from the list above never came back to me.

For this reason, there was designed an individual questionnaire was tailored specifically for the research aim of this thesis what, however, also has its weaknesses. First of all, the response rate was expected to be even smaller than for the surveys sent out by the universities' career services, as it is commonly believed that people tend to click the surveys created by some individuals less often than they would if it was a survey run by well-known institution. Secondly, it would generally be more complicated to reach the people, as I personally could not benefit of a database of recent alumni and would have to seek a different way of distributing the questionnaire. This factor will directly affect the number of respondents in a negative way and might also reduce the representativeness.

Also, it is expected that most respondents will come from the same universities, and unfortunately it will not be possible to investigate employability among graduates in all

institutions. Therefore, the responses might reflect a particular pattern instead of big variety that the research normally aims at.

Moreover, the proposed questionnaire is designed to contain more close-ended questions rather than open-ended ones, as it was initially planned to keep it as short as possible to encourage the respondents to answer as it will not take much time. For this reason, the research is mostly going to provide analysis of quantitative data and will be limited in terms of qualitative approach.

3. Historical Background

3.1. Development of higher education policy in Sweden

Swedish higher education system has been undergoing several large-scale changes that have been transforming and slowly turning it to the state that it is now. In the 1920s, there was only 6 500 higher education students and six higher education institutions in Sweden: Uppsala and Lund universities, Karolinska Institutet, the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm University College and Gothenburg University College (Swedish Higher Education Authority 2020).

In 1921, there was found the first organisation representing the students' voices in Sweden – Swedish National Union of Students what happened quite early compared to other Scandinavian neighbours (1932 in Denmark and 1936 in Norway) and in the same year with Finland. Establishment of national student union gave more representativeness to the students and more opportunities to their views to be heard.

After the Second World War, when technologies and science were in great favour all over the world, the number of higher education students more than doubled as the Swedish higher institutions comprised approximately 14 000 enrolled students (Swedish Higher Education Authority 2020). Nevertheless, the biggest expansion wave hit in the 1960s as the number of students was already three times bigger than in the beginning of the decade (National Agency for Higher Education 1999). In order to be able to manage the growing number of students, the existing universities were reformed and expanded, the number of available degrees increased, the university branches in Karlstad, Linköping, Växjö and Örebro were established in late 1960s and Umeå University opened in 1965. Moreover,

to maintain the quality of research and education in the context of continuous change, in 1959 there was introduced a new teaching category – a lecturer. In fact, this position was a purely teaching one, which signalled an important split in two major missions of the higher education – research and teaching. Thanks to bringing in the lecturer's position, the professors could focus more on quality research and research supervision (Kovalova 2015, 122).

The undertaken measures, however, did not seem to be efficient, such massive higher education expansion required an immediate structural change, as the system was not ready and could not respond positively on the growing need for higher education. Therefore, the ground was already well prepared for reform that could allow more students access the higher education and the universities could provide quality research and teaching. Provoked by the notion of uniformity - *enhetlighet*, the current reforms aimed at establishing "procedural uniformity and through it administrative equality" (Fägerlind and Strömqvist 2004) As the result, there emerged a common system that unified all secondary education[4] under higher education sector and administered within a common higher education regulatory framework (Bauer, et al. 1999).

As the response to a great influx of higher education students, the following measures were undertaken in the context of 1977 higher education reform:

- Admission to the programmes was restricted;
- Degree programmes and non-degree courses were treated differently with the latter one aimed primarily at continuing adult education;
- Admissions were based on points grading system giving priority to the students with high school marks and work experience;
- Higher education institutions without research organisation started to play equally important role as the ones with research. The latter were accepting students in more than twenty Swedish towns apart from the old university cities;
- Influenced by various staff unions and associations, the decision-making bodies were also reformed to include new members to the university and faculty boards;

[4] Here, secondary education encompasses academic, vocational and other professional programs

- To implement a fair resource allocation to all higher education institutions, there were created six regions with one university and several local colleges (Riis 2010, 22-23).

The 1977 reform was followed by a new act and ordinance for the higher education sector that was adopted in 1993. This new reform guaranteed even more freedom and autonomy to the higher education institutions and basically represented a shift from state-level control to governance through outcomes and external bodies that acted upon higher education institutions (Bauer, et al. 1999). In other words, higher education system in Sweden has been firmly stepping towards even greater decentralisation and has become more oriented on the students' preferences. The reform prescript the introduction of a non-compulsory modules that could be chosen upon personal taste instead of completely pre-determined study programmes. In general, the changes applied to the following aspects:

- Admission;
- Programme structure and credit system;
- Degrees;
- Organization and finance regulation;
- Academic staff (Fägerlind and Strömqvist 2004, 220)

Launched in 1999 by the Education ministers of 29 countries (including Sweden), Bologna process has started gaining more influence in the organisation of higher education in European countries. Even though this process seemed to hit Sweden a little later then the majority of the European continent, the mechanisms triggered by the process did develop a decent pace quite quickly after the start. In 2004, the new reform has been developed, in 2005 it was introduced, and only after several years' debates and discussions in was implemented only in 2007.

In 2005, the Swedish government presented a new bill "New world – New university" *("Ny värld - ny högskola"*) which was an official response to the Bologna process and a proposal of changes that could orientate the Swedish higher education system more towards accepted Bologna model. The major proposals were:

- Swedish higher education system should orientate itself more towards internationalisation which is seen to be a key condition for efficient

international cooperation and equals educational quality. The following measures have to be realised to reach the goal:

a) Strengthen student exchange process;
b) The National Agency for Higher Education should formulate Diploma Supplements that would clearly describe the national degree programmes
c) The Agency will also be responsible for promoting the Swedish education abroad

- Educational programmes, courses and degrees will have to be reorganised in order to make Swedish education system more competitive and also to be able to reach the goal of the Bologna process – to establish a common European Higher Education Area by 2010. To do that, it is essential to have a common higher education structure which is presented as follows:
    a) Currently existing 2-cycle higher education that consists of grundläggande högskoleutbildning (basic higher education) and forskarutbildning (research education) should be replaced by a 3-cycle system. The three cycles are: Bachelor level, Master level and Doctorate level;
    b) Educational cycles should also be uniformed in regard to their duration, e.g. it is agreed that Master level education lasts for two years (except for artistry fields)
    c) Admission criteria to different educational levels should also be unified to guarantee full transparency and competitiveness;
    d) Introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) that allows to evaluate students' workload in point-grading system. Common grading system prescribes one week of full-time study being equal to one credit, and one academic year should be graded with 60 credits.
- Knowledge society that is aimed to achieve with implementing the current mechanisms should be accessible for everyone. Therefore, it is important that higher education becomes more inclusive and aims at reaching a greater equality in the recruitment to higher education institutions. The following measures were proposed:
    a) Development of national support scheme for recruitment to higher education institutions;

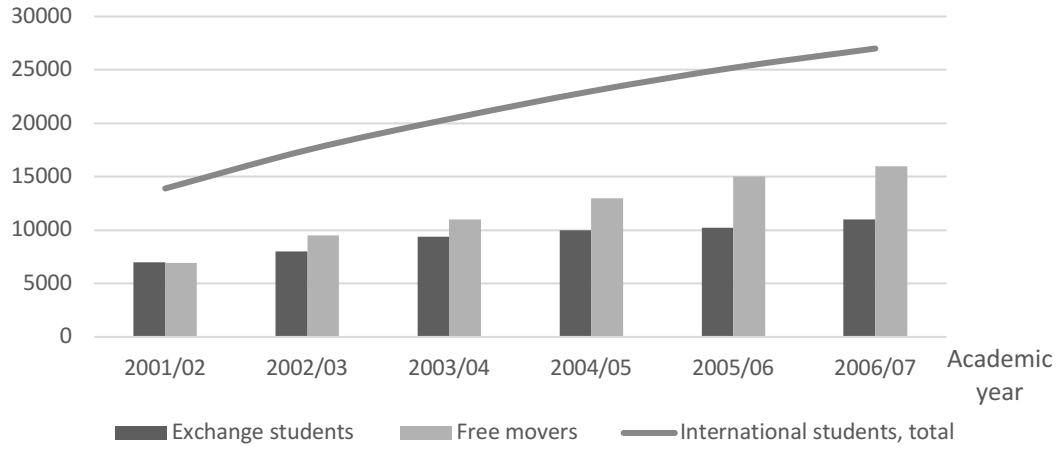
b) More action is needed to recruit more students with a working-class background to longer duration educational programmes as well as to the third cycle of higher education (Doctoral level) where these students are currently under-represented;
c) The National Agency for Higher Education is delegated to monitor and evaluate the progress of the strategy implementation;
d) Higher education institutions need to liaise with schools in order to provoke interest in higher education among upper secondary students

- The admission to the higher education is first and foremost intended in identifying the students that have the capacity to complete the higher education degree and the newly developed system was aimed to replace the one that existed in Sweden since 1992. The system's characteristics are the following:
  a) All higher education programmes are required to check if the student meets the basic eligibility requirements, i.e. if they show the evidence of having the required minimum knowledge for the education to be paid off;
  b) Some degree programmes can have special eligibility criteria, i.e. special requirements the students have to meet to be able to complete the degree. The bill prescribes the higher education institutions to be responsible for testing it under the admission process;
  c) The higher education institutions are allowed to increase the number of places with special eligibility criteria up to 20 percent. This measure aims at attracting the relevant experience and qualification to further education;
  d) Higher education institutions have the responsibility to set up additional admission procedures for equally qualified candidates;
  e) The degree programmes are encouraged to have extra credit modules that will allow students to gain additional competence while completing degree studies (Persson 2005).

Along with the development of the educational policy in Sweden, throughout the years there developed a percentage of international students. As the response to the undertaken measures, the number started to grow, and since 1990s it increased almost on 13 percent every year. As the result, since the 1990s the number of students became almost three

times bigger for 10 years growing from 3.17 percent to 7.3 percent of all students in Sweden for the same period of time (Högskoleverket 2008).

Figure 2. Dynamics in the number of international students, academic year 2001/02 to 2006/07



Source: Swedish Higher Education Authority

The 2010 was marked by another reform that was aimed at protecting the universities' autonomy and quality of education and research. The new reform granted even more freedom to the universities in terms of funding allocation, internal management and organisation leaving the Government in charge of control of education and research quality (Kovalova 2015, 127-128).

In 2011, Swedish government has introduced the tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students that has immediately affected the number of international students coming to Sweden for degree-leading studies. International exchange students, however, were not required to pay fees. Statistics reported an 80% drop in the number of non-EU/EEA students in Sweden and increased homogeneity among the university degree students (Swedish Higher Education Authority 2017).

The reasoning of the tuition fee introduction was quite similar to the one used by the neighbouring Nordic countries (e.g. Denmark). Firstly, it was proposed that Swedish higher education should first and foremost answer the needs of the Swedish citizens. Secondly, it should attract the students all over the world by good study environment and

high academic standard, not by free education – just like in the majority of other European countries (Nordic Council of Ministers 2013).

In addition to the tuition fees, the Swedish government has also implemented additional actions aimed at non-EU/EEA students. Thus, there was introduced a common application fee of SEK 900 for non-EU/EEA students who want to submit their application to one or several Swedish higher education institutions. This measure was intended to decrease the number of speculative applications and at the same time to compensate administrative costs spent on processing applications. Also, the government has allocated SEK 160 million for scholarships for non-EU/EEA students to encourage them to apply to Swedish universities (Nordic Council of Ministers 2013, 28).

As a response to new supporting measures, the report on 2014/15 academic year published by Statistics Sweden documented an increase in the percent of the university entrants with foreign background and reported they totalled 20% of all university entrants (including those born in Sweden with both parents born outside Sweden) (Universitetskanslersämbetet 2016) Moreover, the report announced that nearly half of the first year students at Karolinska Institutet have foreign background.

The report published on the evidence of the academic year 2017/18 revealed an increased total number of the university graduates than in the previous year, and the increased number of the university entrants and degree students. Also, it has reported that in average the university students have become younger than in previous years – 10 years ago average university students age was 27,7 years while in 2017/18 academic year an average student has become almost one year younger – 26,9 years old. More importantly, the percentage of the university students with foreign background has dropped. In 2008/09 academic year there was reported 8% of foreign students, by academic year 2011/12 the percentage has reached 13% but in 2017/18 academic year there were reported only 10% international students in Swedish higher education institutions. The report explained the drop of numbers by the recent introduction of tuition fees for some categories of international students (Universitetskanslersämbetet 2019).

3.2. Overview of study migration policy in Sweden

Recently introduced tuition fees are not the only challenge the international students have to struggle with. When it comes to students born outside EU/EEA or Switzerland,

migration rules can also be a serious obstacle as to get a permit for entry one should meet the requirements set up by local migration authorities. It is important not to underestimate these requirements that can act as a serious barrier on the way of obtaining a degree in Sweden.

Before 1996, there is no statistical data regarding how many foreign nationals there were registered as attending students in Swedish higher education institutions. However, from 1996 onwards the Swedish Higher Education Authority has been keeping a record of these students, and the first evidence reports that in 1996 there was 6 967 international students registered in Swedish universities. According to the report from Statistics Sweden, in 1998 there was almost 13 000 international students in Swedish higher education institutions coming from different parts of the world (SCB 1999).

Figure 3. Number of international students enrolled in Swedish higher education institutions by the country of origin, 1999

Region/ country	**Number**
Northern Europe (excl. Sweden)	4 475
Europe (excl. Nordic Europe)	4 864
Whereof Poland	440
Russia	276
Estonia	112
Latvia	60
Lithuania	67
Africa	498
Asia	2 061
Whereof Iran	614
China	646
North America	634
South America	406
Oceania	61
Total	**12 999**

Source: SCB, Bakgrundsmaterial om befolkningens utbildning 1999:1 "Befolkningens studiedeltagande höstterminen 1998"

The table, however, reflects the number of all international students[5], including exchange students and free movers[6]. It also shows that the prevailing number of international students was coming from neighbouring Nordic countries with almost as many Nordic students as from all other European countries.

Up to the 1970s, labour migration was prevailing in the immigration pattern of Sweden especially from the neighbouring Nordic countries as the country was facing a shortage of labour power and was interested in recruiting employees from abroad. After that, labour migration exceeds refugee and family reunification migration. However, as the European Union started to expand, the labour migrants from other member countries started to flood in seeking better employment conditions, fair salaries and other social benefits (Wadensjö 2007, 2).

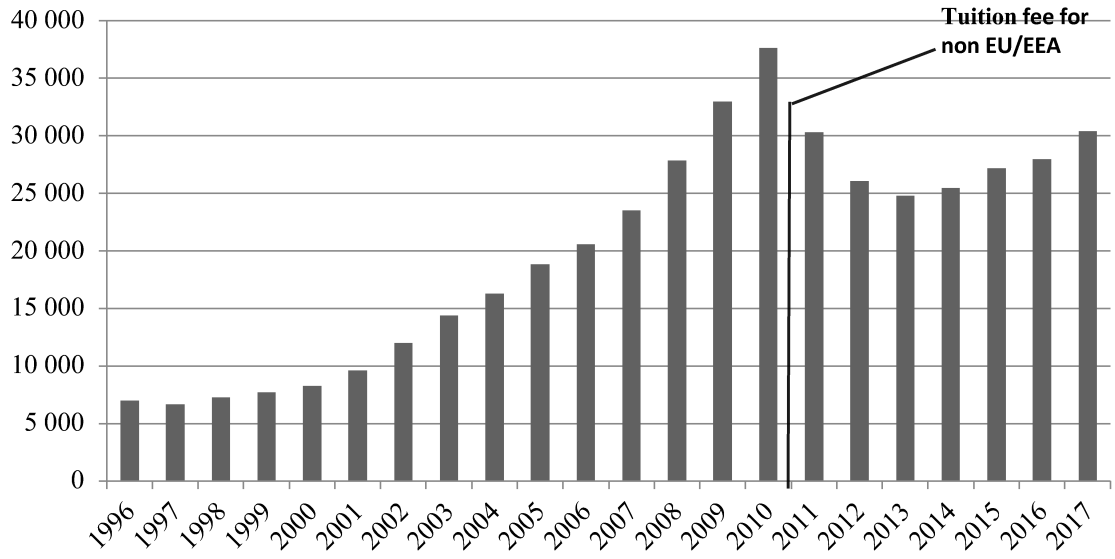
In the 2000s, Sweden continued promoting higher education and attracting foreign nationals to local higher education institutions. Upon the decision of the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, dated by 16 December 1999 the country should create a wide range of conditions to facilitate an effective academic cooperation with the rest of the world. The promotion of Swedish higher education abroad was seen as a top priority as an increased number of international students in Swedish higher education institutions was perceived as a positive sign of local higher education being competitive on the European scene and following high quality standards. Moreover, such higher education enables productive exchange of knowledge and culture (Executive Council Meeting 1999).

Therefore, in the 2000s the number of international students (both degree and non-degree ones) in Sweden continued to grow with years and reached its maximum in 2010 when there were more than 30 000 registered foreign students.

[5] As mentioned earlier, some statistics published by Swedish authorities, unfortunately, doesn't allow to focus only on the international degree students as it normally doesn't specify the number of the degree students

[6] According to the University of Hamburg definition, *free mover* is an international guest student who is enrolled in a higher education institution and who arrives at another university abroad for studying independently, i.e. without being registered for an exchange programme for a limited time (Universität Hamburg 2020)

Figure 4. International students in Sweden



Source: Swedish Higher Education Authority

Moving to the EU for study purposes is one of the most popular routes of settling in one of the EU countries. Thus, in 2010, EU countries have issued nearly 2.5 million residence permits for international citizens. 32.5 percent were work permits, 30.2 percent permits were granted for family reunification, 20.6 percent granted for studies and 17 percent for other purposes. These numbers portray the fact that study immigration from non-EU countries was the third largest immigration pattern EU-wide (Migrationsverket 2012, 7).

Non-EU/EEA citizen who was admitted to a higher education institution in Sweden and who wants to start the studies is required to have a residence permit prior to arrival to Sweden. The terms of residency of third-country nationals are administered by the Aliens Act and the Aliens Ordinance. The first document determines that a temporary residence permit should be issued for an alien who is willing to arrive at Sweden for work, study or other purposes for a period longer than 3 months. These grounds, however, don't let the permanent residence permit to be issued (Utlänningslagen 2005).

According to the Aliens Ordinance, the third-country national admitted to a higher education programme in Sweden shall obtain a temporary residence permit for the duration of his/ her studies. It also determines the requirement the student has to meet in order to be granted the permit:

- The student has to be admitted to a full-time study programme (varies from programme to programme, approximately 40 hours per week) that requires a physical presence in the country (distance learning not allowed);
- The student has secured enough means for living in Sweden that could cover the expenses for the entire period of his/ her studies in the country and would be enough for the return journey. The Swedish Migration Board set the minimum amount required to be on the student's bank account to secure his/ her living in Sweden. In 2006, it was required to have a minimum of SEK 7 300 per month multiplied by minimum 10 months for one academic year. From 1 January 2020, the minimum amount required by the Swedish Migration Board is SEK 8 514 per month (Migrationsverket 2020). As an alternative to it, the student can have a scholarship that would completely or partially correspond to the requirements set by the Swedish Migration Board. Depending on the size of the scholarship, the required minimum amount on the student's bank account can be different;
- The student has a comprehensive health insurance that would cover possible medical expenses in Sweden. Alternatively, if the higher education institution or other institution provides an insurance for its students, a letter of admission can be counted as one;
- The student is no threat to a public policy, security or public health;
- The student has already paid a part of his/ her tuition fee and can show a proof. The size of the tuition fee depends on the study field and institution. Normally, studies in science, medicine and architecture tend to be more expensive than in other fields. Annual tuition fee is normally within the range from SEK 80 000 to SEK 180 000. Alternatively, if the student is an exempt from tuition fee (e.g. he/she was granted with tuition fee waiver), a respective proof should be presented accordingly. Without it, the admission to a higher education institution is considered to be conditional and is not a valid ground for being granted a residence permit (Regeringens proposition 2010)

In order to keep Sweden an attractive destination for international students and not to discourage by introducing tuition fees, the Swedish government has decided to invest into scholarships for talented students coming from outside EU/EEA countries. The most widespread type of scholarship is aimed and waiving tuition fee for this category of

students. Individual institutions can also award other types of scholarships aimed at covering living costs. In 2011, approximately 40% of students liable to pay tuition fees were exempted from paying them by means of awarding them a particular type of scholarship (Högskoleverket 2011).

The major governmental body awarding scholarships for third-country nationals is the Swedish Institute. Together with active promotion of Swedish higher education, this institution provides financial support in the form of scholarships to the students from different academic fields depending on the country of their origin. Currently they offer a range of scholarship programmes aimed at both Master's degree students and professionals in particular areas. Among the funding opportunities available for students, the Swedish Institute offers 4 funding schemes:

1. Swedish Institute Scholarships for Global Professionals (SISGP) open for 34 countries nationals;
2. Swedish Institute Scholarships for South Africa (SISSA) available exclusively for South Africa nationals;
3. Swedish Institute Scholarships for the Western Balkans and Turkey that is open for 7 countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey;
4. Visby programme scholarships aimed at 7 countries' nationals: Available for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine (Swedish Instutute 2020)

The scholarships are awarded on a student's merits basis and on the basis of his/her motivation evidence, and on the evidence of the studies contributing to developing professional skills. The Swedish Institute scholarships are highly competitive as the offer is quite limited. Thus, in 2018/19 academic year, the Swedish Institute has received 2,362 applications from 779 applicants for Visby programme only, and approximately 60 scholarships were granted in total (Swedish Institute 2020).

The decline in the number of international degree students from outside EU/EEA studying in Sweden from 2011 onwards can also be grounded in the introduction of the biometric residence cards in 2011. Despite a quite convenient possibility to apply for the residence permit online, the students are still required to make a visit to the Swedish Mission in

order to record biometric data. For the students living in the countries with no Swedish mission abroad, such visit is normally associated with high costs and time loss.

Despite the aforementioned measures and good promotional strategy, as it follows from the table no. 5 the number of international degree students in Sweden has decreased since 2011. When it comes to non-EU/EEA nationals in particular, the decrease tends to be even more drastic than it follows from the table, as it counts all non-Swedish students as international. According to the data published by the Swedish Migration Board, the number of residence permit applications dropped more than two times in 2011 after the tuition fee introduction.

Figure 5. Total first-time residence permits granted for studies, 2006-2011

	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
No residence permits granted for studies	7 331	8 920	11 186	13 487	14 188	6 836

Source: Swedish Migration Board

The drop was especially visible for nationals of particular countries. Thus, the number of Chinese nationals received student residence permit in 2011 dropped from 2 602 in 2010 to 1 481 (43% drop), for Indian nationals the drop was 71%, for Ethiopian citizens it was 81% and for students from Bangladesh it was 90%. The drop in number of residence permits granted to US citizens was not so striking, only 19% and 21% drop for Canada nationals and 24% for students from Turkey (Wadensjö 2007, 22).

3.3. Overview of the labour market integration services for foreign students in Sweden

As the result of a massive influx of foreign immigrants, the Swedish authorities have to develop a strategy of integrating them into the Swedish society and local labour market. In fact, Swedish government regularly allocates resources to support foreign job-seekers and employees. Subsequently, there appeared a wide range of supporting mechanisms that are implemented on different levels: institutional, communal, governmental. In general, these strategies are designed to enhance a particular set of skills.

Firstly, all labour market integration initiatives focus on providing the immigrants with access to language courses. Folkuniversitetet, adult educational association, offers a free language course for all immigrants (Swedish for Immigrants or SFI) that meet only two criteria: 1) being over 16 years old; 2) having a Swedish personal identity number. However, the course is only available in 14 Swedish cities (Göteborg, Hässleholm, Helsingborg, Kalmar, Karlstad, Knislinge, Kristianstad, Landskrona, Lund, Malmö, Nybro, Uppsala, Varberg, Växjö) (Folkuniversitetet 2020). Therefore, residents of other cities may experience practical difficulties in accessing the course. However, the Swedish municipalities also offer municipality-funded free language courses for all immigrants who have a legal residence in this municipality.

Moreover, Folkeuniversitetet offers other courses designed specifically for immigrants willing to integrate into local labour market:

- *Korta vägen – an academic fast track into your field* – a tailored course that consists from full-time study, assessment and personal education, career coaching and working life orientation, internship and language lessons specifically for the individuals' professional field;
- *Stöd och matchning – a helping hand in your job search* – programme for immigrants that are registered with Arbetsförmedlingen (The Swedish Public Employment Service) that provides with individual guidance in obtaining an employment;
- *Establishment course* – similar to the previous one, this programme is open for the individuals registered with Arbetsförmedlingen where the responsible person evaluates the individual's profile and tailors the study plan to familiarise with the local labour market;
- International Swedish University Programs (ISU) – various courses for international job-seekers aiming to boost their labour market integration (Folkuniversitetet 2020)

Another important milestone in creating a more inclusive labour market is to launch the mechanisms that would evaluate and recognise the competences gained abroad. In order to mitigate the mismatch and benefit from the skilled immigration, Sweden offers complementary education for occupations such as teachers, doctors, nurses and others. Speaking of international students, it is important to notice that foreign education is recognised in Sweden and assessed by a respective agency - Universitets- och

högskolerådet (The University and Higher Education Council). Another agency, The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för Yrkeshögskolan) is responsible for validating the foreign qualifications, providing with certificates and matching them with relevant stakeholders.

Nevertheless, despite these measures, some employers are sceptical towards recruiting foreigners (Bursell 2007). Therefore, Sweden has developed a range of policies supporting international employees including:

- Step-in-jobs (Instegg job) – programme that grants a financial aid amounting to 80% salary costs for new immigrant employees up to two years;
- New Start Jobs (Nystartjobb) – aimed at both employees who have been unemployed for a long time and those who have recently arrived at Sweden. This programme guarantees a contribution towards the employees pay allocated to the employer;
- Apprenticeships for new arrivals – compensation for on-the-job training costs paid to the employer;
- Applied basic year – provision of low educated new employees with on-the-job training

Efficient coordination of the joint efforts to support foreign nationals' integration into Swedish labour market is the matter that is managed both on municipal and national level. Therefore, it is essential to discuss the key stakeholders that actively participate in this long-term process. Thus, *The Swedish Public Employment Service* is the central agency that is busy arranging the introduction programme, tailoring an individual integration plan, evaluating the introduction allowance and assisting with settlement for the immigrants that struggle finding accommodation in Sweden.

Municipalities, in turn, coordinate SFI, arrange civic orientation and assist with finding accommodation for recently arrived immigrants and providing with childcare. The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) is responsible for settling quota refugees and assisting the immigrants who are not eligible for the governmental introduction scheme (e.g. asylum seekers who have not yet been granted a residence permit). The municipalities' administrative boards take care of preparing municipalities for welcoming new immigrants, and this is not a complete list of actors participating in this long-term and complicated process but a more general overview of the most significant ones instead.

As it was discussed earlier, an important route of newly-arrived immigrants is studying in one of the Swedish higher education institutions. Therefore, the universities not only focus on promoting education and research but also on creating facilities for their students to help better integrate into the Swedish society and national labour market.

Firstly, similar to Finland, one of the most important ways to increase the international students' employability in Sweden is to provide them with high quality Swedish language courses. Therefore, nowadays, each higher education institution in Sweden offers Swedish language courses specifically designed for the international students. Taking as case study Lund University, there, students can learn Swedish on different levels, from 1 to 8, upon their proficiency (Lund University 2020).

Also, each university provides the students with various career services aiming to navigate, consult and coach the students focusing on the aspects that are crucial for their further employment. Normally, the career services arranged within a university offer a more or less uniformed set of services which could be generally classified as the ones counselling on the peculiarities of the local labour market and assisting in finding a job. Thus, Lund University, for example, regularly arranges Career Seminars where the students are instructed on how to write a CV, apply for a job and behave during a job interview. In order to get the necessary practical experience either in Sweden or abroad, the students are encouraged to apply for an internship as a part of degree studies and the universities[7]. Moreover, several Master's degree programmes include practical internship as an obligatory component of the study curriculum. To find the internship, the students can use any ways that seem appropriate, get an approval from the study coordinator and, if possible, funding that could cover living expenses while working. Some degree programmes assist their students in finding an internship place, sometimes, the university career services can provide help too. In particular degree programmes (normally within the natural or technical sciences), the students can write their degree project in a local company and start networking with it already on the stage of thesis-writing which can be beneficial not only for the student but also for the receiving company. In addition, the students can use the university's career portal where they can review and later apply for any of the job listed with the permission of the university. This career portal can also be

[7] In Lund University, for example, many Bachelor and Master's programs offer an opportunity to include an internship in a study curriculum what most often happens on the autumn semester of the second year (for a two-year program) or on the fifth semester of the three-year program (Lund University 2020)

used for getting an employment upon the graduation as many of the job listings recruit people for a full-time position.

From discussing career services for students offered by Swedish higher education institutions with evidence from Lund university, a major tendency toward decentralising can be noticed: it depends on the particular university, how successful the career portal will be and it depends on the faculty, how well organised are the counselling and career advising services for local students. Looking ahead, it is clear how the system differs from the Finnish model. Unlike in Finland, the majority of Swedish universities[8] (Lund University, Gothenburg University, Stockholm University, Umeå University and others) offer a faculty-based career services particularly tailored for the students of a specific academic field. In Finnish higher education institutions, on the contrary, the majority of universities focus on providing general support and advice for all degree students. Moreover, networking between Swedish universities with regards to students' employability is not as developed as in Finland where this network successfully works and grows continuously each year.

3.4. Development of higher education policy in Finland

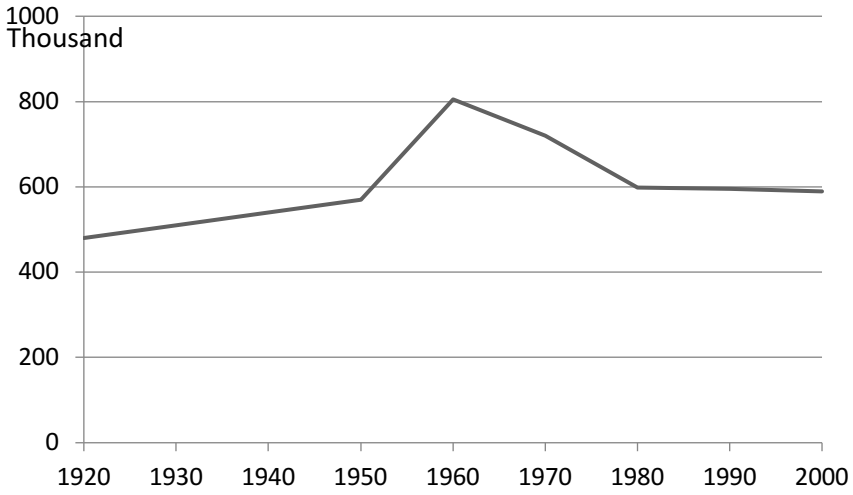
First university in Finland was founded in 1648 in Turku, and up until the 1900s education was considered to be a privilege for the elite. Since the Finnish elite was primarily Swedish-speaking, the education was also oriented towards them. So, in the 19th century when the nationalistic wave engulfed Europe, Finland was affected too, and educating Finnish-speaking people of common origin became an effective tool of the nation-building and establishing Finnish language as official language. So, in 1866 there was published law on common schools which is now widely considered as an initial stage of the building the system that would provide common people with education (Leijola 2004, 5).

By the 1900s, the education in Finland still remained rather elitarian despite a common tendency of widening the education participation among Finnish population. Children of more elitarian origin could get education in secondary schools while agrarian population could attend common schools and then continue studies in civic schools. 1921 was

[8] To come up with such conclusion, I went through the websites of the career services of the listed further Swedish universities What was revealed is a greater volume of the study department-based career services which is different from most Finnish universities (see below) (Lund University 2020)

marked with an important milestone – Compulsory School Attendance Act that prescribed all children aged 7-13 compulsory school attendance (6 grades). This measure brought its positive outcomes: in 1920 only 70% of 15-year-old children were literate while in 1930s the literacy rate among same group was already 90%. Effectively, the number of students attending kept growing rapidly up until 1960s and new education reforms (Statistics Finland 2020).

Figure 6. Number of pupils in general basic education



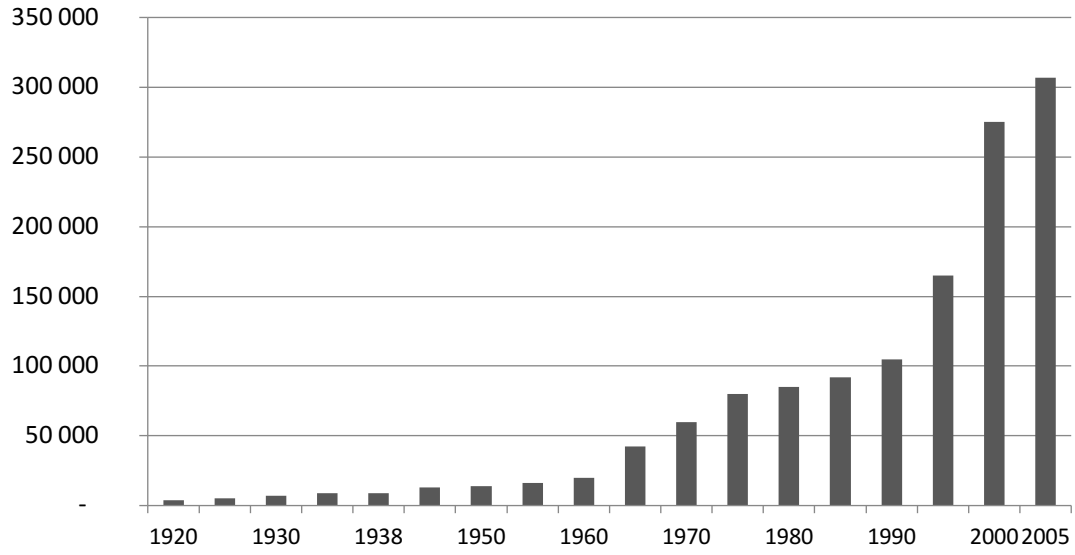
Source: Statistics Finland

Secondary school education was, however, still associated with children of more privileged origin, and its attendance rate didn't reach 10% up until 1930s. In the later years, the secondary school attendance also started to grow, and in 1950s the quarter and nearly 40% in 1960s of the young people attended secondary schools in Finland. Moreover, the students started to arrive from more varied backgrounds, as the attendance among young people whose parents didn't have secondary education also increased. Same tendency can be observed in upper secondary school attendance: in 1950s there was only 10% students who entered upper secondary institution compared to 50% attendance rate in the 1980s (Statistics Finland 2020).

Also, the 20th century in Finland has seen the establishment of new universities: Helsinki University of Technology (TKK) that was founded under the Russian rule in 1849 and gained the university status in 1908, Helsinki School of Economics (now Aalto University School of Business) that opened in 1911 and Svenska handelshögskolan (Hanken School of Economics) that was founded in 1909. After Finland has been declared independent in

1917, Åbo Akademi, the University of Turku (now in Turku) welcomed new students in 1918 and 1920 respectively. As the result, the number of higher education students continuously grew year by year and 2 500 registered students in 1900 turned into 9 000 registered students in 1938.

Figure 7. Students attending higher education 1920-2005



Source: Statistics Finland

The higher education expansion continued, and with time new universities opened their doors in Finland:

- University of Oulu in 1958;
- Vaasa School of Economics (now University of Vaasa) in 1966;
- School of Social Sciences moved to Tampere and renamed to University of Tampere in 1966 (initially opened in 1925 as the Civic College in Helsinki);
- Tampere University of Technology (TUT) in 1965;
- Teacher Seminary that was originally founded in 1863 renamed to University of Jyväskylä and gained university status in 1967;
- Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) in 1969;
- University of Joensuu in 1969.

The 1990s brought to life a new educational reform that has introduced polytechnic institutions (university of applied sciences in Sweden) to the Finnish higher education

system. Since the number of students wanting to pursue a higher education continued to grow the system has faced the pressing urge to answer the needs of the population. As an experiment, the first polytechnic university started operating in 1991, and it was planned to continue the observation until 1999. Together with local universities, experimentally opened 22 vocational institutions could now host approximately 65% of all upper secondary students every year (Lampinen 2000). Vocational institutions that in research literature are referred to as "polytechnics" or "universities of applied sciences" were introduced as a way of obtaining a vocational education on a higher level that would be equivalent to a university degree. The main idea behind such split between universities and universities of applied sciences was to differentiate the teaching areas, Thus, universities have become more affiliated with scientific research and teaching while the major focus of vocational institutions was to provide education more connected with work and practice. Therefore, the research and teaching in universities of applied sciences usually involved cooperation with particular work industries and employees.

Generally speaking, the reforms adopted in the 1990s were reflecting the reaction to so-called "globalisation shock" (as named by Juusi Välimaa) which significantly shaped the following higher education policy development in Finland (Välimaa 2010). Now the higher education was more concerned of the economic aims and gradually granted the universities with more autonomy in regard to management and administration.

Another important measure that has been implemented by the Finnish government in order to help spread the education among the population is the introduction of the government financial aid for the students. The system first appeared in 1969 when the students could receive a government-guaranteed study loan so that more students could afford studying no matter their parental income. Then, in the 1970s, the students could also receive the housing supplement to cover the expenses for rent in addition to the study grant. In 1992, the size of the grant has doubled at it finally meant that the emphasis was put onto transferring from study loan practice to study grant system (Leijola 2004, 9).

Even though the greater exposure to the higher education internationalisation policies has been the result of the 1990s' "globalisation shock", the international mobility still existed in Finnish universities before. This international mobility, however, was mostly

based on the existing personal connections and cooperation between universities and was mostly seen as informal except for the one that took place under the existing inter-institutional agreements. In the mid-1980s – 1990s Finnish higher education institutions started participating more actively in academic exchange programmes. Before Finland joined the EU, as a EFTA country it started negotiations on participating in academic mobility programme ERASMUS and obtain the right for participation in 1990 and 1991 (National Agency for Higher Education 1997, 74-75).

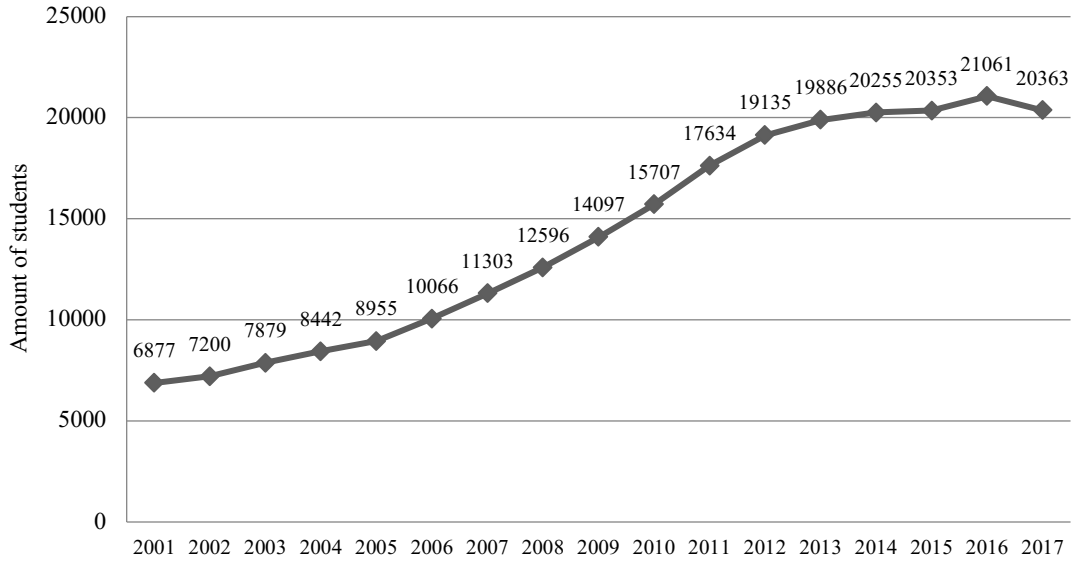
Of course, the academic cooperation on the international level massively strengthened after Finland entered the EU in 1995. Bologna declaration aiming at creating a common European Higher Education Area was a significant milestone in this process which opened the doors of Finnish higher education institutions to international students. As a result, the number of these students began to rise continuously every year: from 6 877 international degree students registered in Finland in 2001 the number developed into 20 362 students in 2017 (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018).

The aim to enhance internationalisation of higher education in Finland was announced on official level as it was seen as an effective way of making Finland attractive for business, work and living. Therefore, to achieve it, in 2009 Finnish Ministry of Education has identified a number of interim goals that would contribute to increasing the internationalisation which are:

- Creating a genuinely international higher education community – this applies not only to attracting the international students but also to the staff members;
- Increasing the quality and attractiveness of higher education institutions which hugely relates to the previous objective;
- Promoting the export of expertise, and expertise and education are seen as important values for export;
- Supporting a multicultural society;
- Promoting global responsibility as high-quality higher education can have a positive effect on solving global problems (Ministry of Education, Finland 2009)

The figure below shows how the number of international students registered in Finnish higher education institutions developed on a yearly basis.

Figure 8. International students in Finnish higher education institutions



Source: Statistics Finland

Despite the common tendency to grow, the graph still shows a small 3% decline in numbers in the academic year 2017. The proportion of the foreign students has also declined, and in 2017, it was 6.8 which is, however, still higher than the average percentage in the OECD countries (5.7% in 2016). Moreover, the decline was even more drastic in the number of foreign students who enrolled in Finnish higher education institutions in autumn 2017: 4 150 first year foreign students against 5 500 registered foreign first year students in 2016 (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018).

Aforementioned decline in the number of foreign degree students was a consequence of the introduction of tuition fees for non-EU/EEA citizens willing to complete higher education in Finland starting from autumn 2017. By implementing this measure, the Finnish Government was aiming to increase the competitiveness of Finnish higher education and hence improve the quality of the delivered education. Before the Amendments to the Universities Act accepted in 2016, Finland has already held an experimental tuition fee introduction in local universities from 2010 to 2014. On this stage, universities and universities of applied sciences had full autonomy to decide the size of the tuition fees to be charged from non-EU/EEA citizens but were required to develop a system of scholarships that could partly support the students who were required to pay fees. The results of this pilot project were closely monitored and analysed in order to decide if the measure is viable and appropriate for further maintenance (Nordic Council of Ministers 2013).

On December 15th, 2015 the Finnish Parliament has proposed eliminating free higher education for non-EU/EEA citizens. The proposal has passed, and from autumn 2017 onwards the universities were obliged to charge a minimum fee of € 1 500 annually from the international students with the following exceptions:

- Tuition fees are not to be charged from citizens of the countries that belong to the European Economic Area or who are considered as European Union citizens under European Union treaties or treaties between European Union and its Member States with another party;
- Tuition fees are not charged from the students who have a European Union Blue Card, residence permit that is either continuous or permanent issued for a third-country national, not to a family member of the before mentioned person;
- Tuition fees are not applicable to the students willing to obtain as called in the Universities Act, "commissioned education" i.e. degree programmes aimed at a particular group of students which are commissioned and paid by either the Finnish state, another state, an international organisation, a Finnish or foreign public corporation, a foundation or a private corporation (Universities Act 558/2009)

Since the majority of the international students enrolled in Finnish higher education institutions come from non-EU/EEA countries, the newly-introduced tuition fees largely decreased their presence in Finnish universities. According to the statistical data, the ethnic groups that were affected most were Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian students (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018).

Figure 9. Counties of origin with the most significant decline in the number of incoming students 2016-2017

Universities	**New students in 2017**	**Change 2016-2017**	**Universities of applied sciences**	**New students in 2017**	**Change 2016-2017**
Vietnam	90	-163	Vietnam	329	-423
China	177	-140	Russia	286	-202
Russia	171	-113	China	127	-47
Bangladesh	74	-95	Cameroon	57	-34
Iran	60	-75	Nigeria	76	-31

Source: Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018

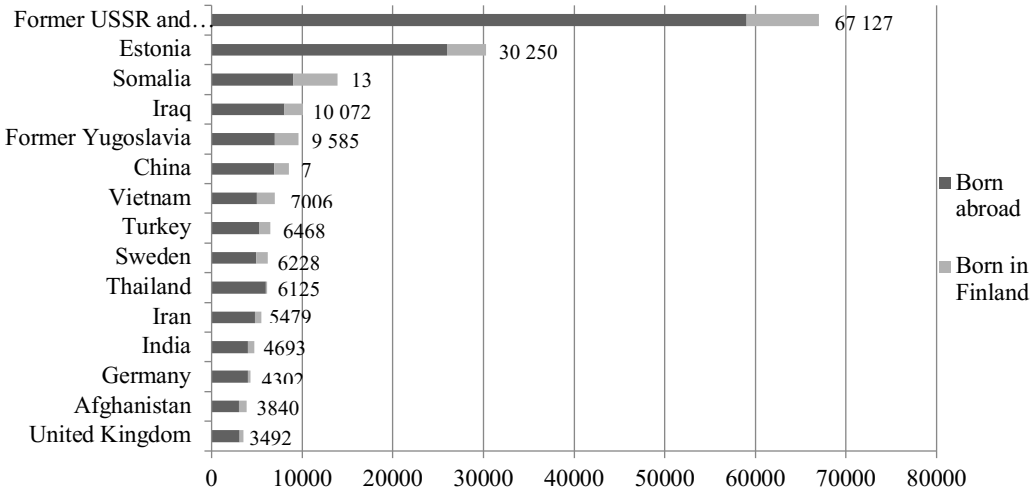
Unlike in Sweden, in Finland there is currently no governmentally-subsidised scholarship schemes that could support third-country nationals willing to obtain a degree in Finland. Instead, it is seen as universities' responsibility to create the system that would support these students and hence encourage them to apply to local higher education institutions. Therefore, each university has its own system of financial support to these students. Thus, University of Helsinki, for example, currently has two categories of grants aimed at international students: fully funded grant (Tuition fee + 10 000 EUR) and full tuition fee grant with regards to tuition fee varying from 13 000 to 18 000 EUR (University of Helsinki 2020). As for the University of Turku, it offers either two-year tuition fee scholarship covering entire tuition fee, covering only 50% of the fee or one-year scholarship for outstanding academic performance demonstrated during the 1st study year (University of Turku 2020).

Alternatively, the students can enrol into Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree programme that takes place in one Finnish university and get financial support from the EU instead.

3.5. Overview of study migration policy in Finland

In the XX century, Finland has been welcoming immigrants from all over the world and shortly after the World War II, the migration pattern changed from emigration to immigration being the dominating one. By 2011, the total number of Finnish residents of foreign origin estimated approximately 257 00 which was almost 5% of the total population. Only 37 500 of them were born in Finland while the prevailing majority originated from other countries. The statistics shows that most of them (59%) came from other European countries, 23% had Asian background and 12% has African background. The graph below shows more detailed data on the most popular countries of origin of the foreign residents in Finland in 2011 (Ministry of the Interior 2013).

Figure 10. Largest groups among population of foreign origin, 2011

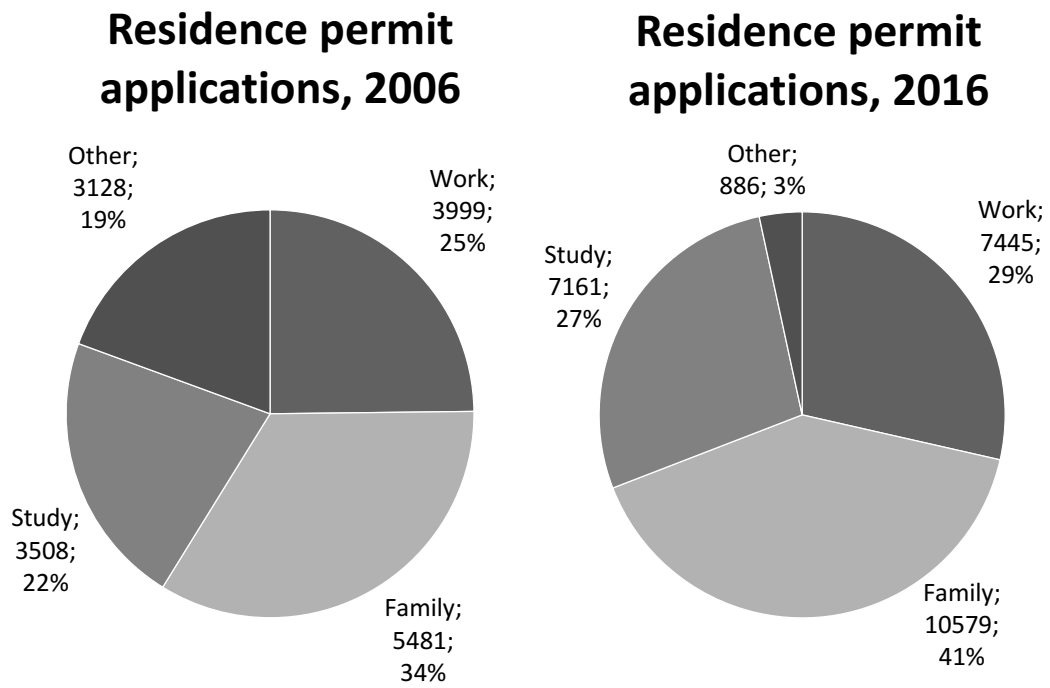


Source: Statistics Finland

The evidence from the graph portrays that the majority of foreign residents in Finland are third-country nationals (as referred to a citizen of a non-EU/EEA country by migration authorities) with the absolute majority of them coming from the former Soviet Union countries.

The immigration pattern has also changed: the statistical data for 2006 and 2016 illustrates that the number of granted residence permit has increased, and the proportion between residence permit categories has also been affected. The graph no. 10 shows that in total the number of residence permit application in 2016 was approximately 1,5 times higher than in 2006, and the proportion of the study migration has also increased compared with 2006.

Figure 11. First residence permit applications by type, 2006 - 2016



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Generally, the requirements that Finnish migration authorities set for the third-country nationals in order to obtain a residence permit on the ground of studies are similar to the ones realised by the Swedish Migration Authorities. All non-EU/EEA citizens coming to Finland for study purposes for longer than three months (90 days) are required to apply for a residence permit prior to their arrival at Finland. Similar to the practice of other European countries, these nationals can either apply for it online or by paying a visit to local foreign mission in their country of legal residence.

Recently, Finland has been encouraging residence permit applicants to hand in their applications online by introducing a lower application fee (€ 350 for online application against € 450 for submitting paper application) and guaranteeing shorter processing times (1-3 months for online application to be processed against 4-5 months for paper application) (Finnish Immigration Service 2020). However, after Finland brought into use the biometric residence permit card, all applicants were required to pay a visit to Finnish mission abroad in order to submit biometrics (fingerprints and biometric photo). This requirement can be potentially connected to a number of difficulties for some categories of applicants, and, as mentioned before, the applicants residing in places with Finnish mission located on a big distance might have to go through significant travel costs and time waste.

At the moment, The Finnish Immigration Service (Maahanmuuttovirasto) has the following requirements for residence permit for studies:

- to pay the application fee and visit Finnish mission abroad to submit biometric data;
- to be eligible to entry the country, i.e. not to have a prohibition of entry;
- not to be a danger to "public order and security", "public health" and "Finland's international relations";
- have obtained a study place in Finland:
  a) the studies should lead to a degree;
  b) higher education institution should be recognised by the Finnish higher education system
  c) alternatively, the studies can lead to a vocational qualification
- have secured sufficient funds for living in Finland which has been estimated as minimum € 560 per month or € 13 440 for a two-year period. Alternatively, the student can have € 6 720 which is enough for one study year and extend the residence permit for the second year later;
- have a valid insurance that would cover all medical costs associated with any illness that may occur under the applicant's stay in Finland (Finnish Immigration Service 2020)

The residence permit for studies is granted for the period of studies and can be extended up to one year after graduation for job-seeking purposes (against maximum 6 months residence permit for job-seeking in Sweden). The residence permit can be granted if the applicant meets the general requirement: sufficient income, comprehensive health insurance and proof of degree completion (Finnish Immigration Service 2020). In addition, residence permit for studies allows students to work 25 hours per week during academic terms and to work full-time in the periods of no instruction at the higher education institution.

3.6. Overview of the labour market integration services for foreign students in Finland

As mentioned above, most international students moving to Finland for degree studies admit that they considered the chance to gain full-time employment in the country after graduation as an important factor for choosing Finland as the destination for the studies.

Moreover, their expectations go hand in hand with the Finnish Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions which sees internationalisation not only as a key tool to improve the quality of the Finnish higher education but also to recruit competent and skilled immigrant workforce to answer the needs of the labour market (Ministry of Education, Finland 2009). Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of the existing labour integration services and initiatives aimed at foreign nationals in general and particularly at the foreign students to understand how they can overcome the major obstacles on the way of gaining employment.

Firstly, the majority of the labour integration activities are administered in compliance with The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (Integration Act) that came into force on 1 September 2011. The act was adopted in order to provide all immigrants with key information about Finnish society, labour market and service that promote integration. The integration services are based on the individual's educational and professional profile, language proficiency and general life situation. Moreover, the Act specifies the area of responsibility of the municipalities, the Employment and Economic Development Office (TE-toimisto), the ministries, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Development (ELY-keskus) and the Regional State Administrative Agency (Aluehallintovirasto).

Since the lack of the language proficiency is most often reviewed as the major barrier on the way to the labour market (as previous research, e.g. Ciulinaru (Ciulinaru 2010) revealed it) the Act prescribes a promotion of Finnish or Swedish language courses among foreign nationals residing in Finland. Therefore, when the international students arrive to Finland for degree studies, it is important to enhance their Finnish language skills in order to strengthen their position on the local labour market. The Finnish government together with the Ministry of Education and Culture promote the idea of making Finnish language courses at the international degree and non-degree programmes if not compulsory at least a significant component of the study curriculum. Therefore, nowadays, all Finnish higher education institutions offer a wide range of Finnish and Swedish language courses upon level of proficiency and area of use (e.g. Finnish language for business). These courses are open for both exchange and degree students whose first language is different from Finnish and/ or Swedish. When the international students graduate but still wish to improve Finnish language skills, they can access the available language courses through different channels:

- Finnish language courses for adults offered by the local municipality authorities;
- As a part of studies, i.e. if you are registered with the Employment and Economic Development Office you can study Finnish as labour market training;
- At the workplace if the employer can organise you the training

All listed above options demonstrate that providing sufficient language training available for immigrants is of a high priority in the Finnish labour integration agenda which is supported by multiple initiatives on different levels.

Another important milestone in creating a more inclusive atmosphere for non-Finnish employees is creating the job opportunities that will not require Finnish language proficiency. As the result, in 2020, initiated by the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment a new service "Jobs in Finland" started functioning. This service is a website with open job vacancies that "don't require Finnish skills, serving employers in Finland and job seekers in Finland and abroad" (Jobs in Finland 2020). Unfortunately, the aspirations of foreign job-seekers didn't realise as the majority of the advertisements were either made in Finnish or required at least good knowledge of Finnish.

This initiative is a part of Talent Boost programme aimed at supporting the immigration of specialists, employees, students and researchers. This programme sets long-term objectives that upon achievement can make the Finnish labour market more inclusive toward the international employees by completing the following goals:

- Reduce the processing of the residence permit applications for work to one month;
- Attract and support international talents and their families with settling in Finland;
- Develop a model for recruitment of foreign specialists;
- Develop inclusiveness and diversity at the workplace (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2020)

Another important measure that follows the agenda on increasing the internationalisation of the Finnish labour market is to increase the opportunities for self-employment. This was multiple times stressed by such actors like the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Federation of Finnish Enterprises and the Confederation of Finnish Industries as an effective pathway to integration (Bontenbal, I., Pekkarinen, A-G., Lillie, N. 2019). However, the challenges that Finnish entrepreneurs usually face are normally multiplied when it comes to the entrepreneurs of the foreign origin as the lack of

networks, language skills and overall awareness of the existing services and policies are mostly considered as specific for foreigners (Bontenbal, I., Pekkarinen, A-G., Lillie, N. 2019).

For this reason, from the 2018 onwards foreigners outside the EU/EEA who want to set up a business in Finland can apply for a startup permit – temporary residence permit for the specialists for maximum 2 years who want to open their business in Finland. As the result, in 2019, there was granted 24 residence permit of this category and a huge part of applications came from the international researchers willing to commercialise their idea that came up as the result of their research (Finnish Immigration Service 2019).

However, when it comes to analysing the employability of foreign graduate students, it is important to be aware of the measures Finnish higher education institutions implement to support their students' employability and help them better navigate in the Finnish labour market. Therefore, Finnish universities[9] have Career Services designed to help their students familiarise with the pathways of obtaining employment, maintaining it and, further, being able to move within the labour market. Since the percentage of international degree students enrolled in higher education institutions continuously becomes more visible, these services start to orientate themselves more towards providing assistance aimed at English-speaking students too.

For example, at the moment, career services at higher education institutions in Turku area provide the following variety of services for their students:

- Personal and group career guidance;
- Job interviews rehearsals;
- Internships guidance;
- CV-clinics (CV advising);
- Organisations of the events dedicated to working in Finland (Study in Turku 2020)

In addition, 13 Finnish universities participate in the network of Academic Career Services – Aarresaari. In fact, these services represent a board where employers can publish job advertisements aimed at both current students and recent graduates. Initially,

[9] Here, several universities' websites were looked upon, such as University of Turku (University of Turku 2020), Tampere University and Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Tampere University 2020) and University of Helsinki (University of Helsinki 2020)

this measure was designed to increase the students' employability as they were normally looking for the employees that potentially come from this community. However, despite the fact that Finnish universities host a lot of international students each year, the majority of these advertisements is aimed at the employees with good knowledge of Finnish. Also, Aarresaari regularly monitors the employment rate of the recent graduates, collects the data and publishes it on its webpage.

As the result of the aforementioned measures, the most current career monitoring results conducted by Aarresaari for the period of 2017-2018 portray quite positive statistics of approximately 86% recent Master's degree graduate students and 91% Doctoral degree graduate students having any kind of employment. The statistics, unfortunately, does not specify the students' country of origin so it only provides the general overview of the recent graduate's employment status. Also, when it comes to the level of satisfaction with the employment, the figure no. 11 below shows how the Aarresaari survey respondents identified their relation to their job and how their responses differ depending on degree they have obtained in Finland (Master or Doctoral).

Figure 12. Assessment between current job and degree completed in 2012, n=5280 (Master's degree)

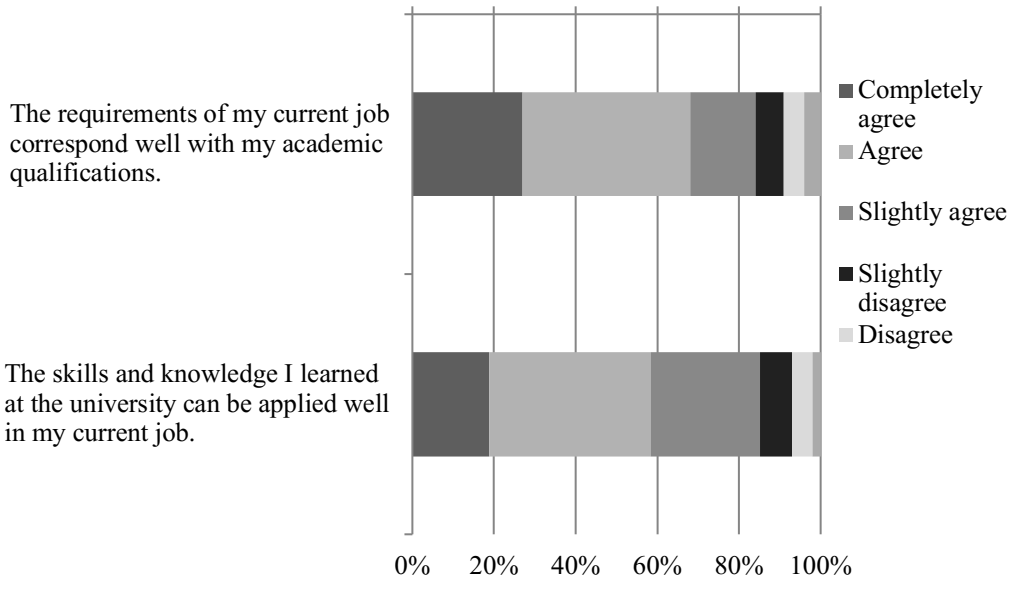
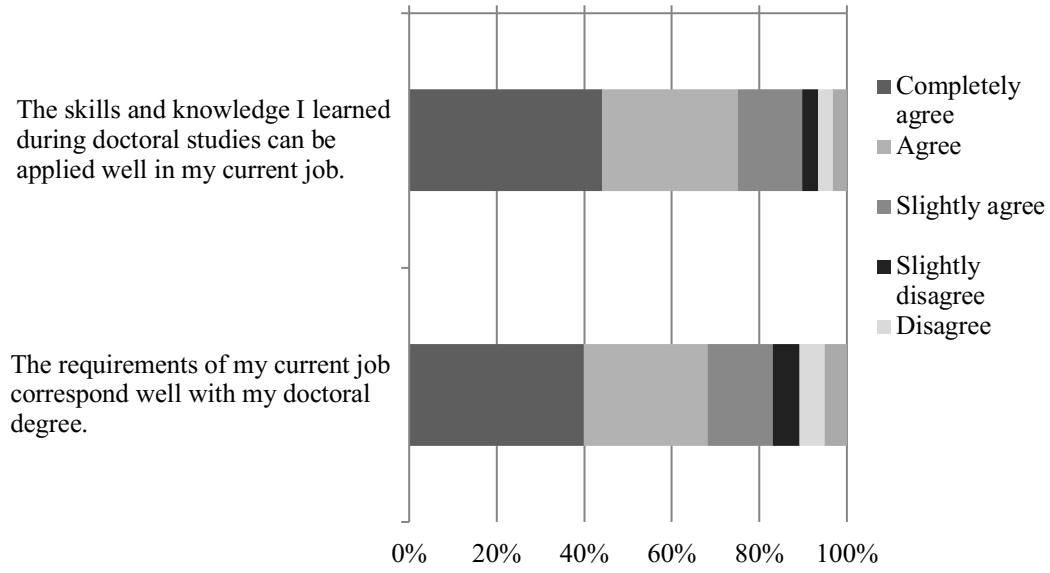


Figure 13. Assessment between current job and degree completed in 2012, n=5280 (Doctoral degree)



Source: Aarresaari

Also, from the graph shows that the overall satisfaction with the applicability of the acquired degree is higher among those who have graduated from a Doctoral programme than among those with a Master's degree: approx. 44% respondents with Doctoral degree completely agree that their skills can be well applied in the current job (against 27% of Master's graduates) and approx. 40% consider the requirements of the current employment being related to their degree (against approx. 19% for Master's degree respondents).

4. Results

This chapter will focus on representing the data collected through questionnaires and analyse the relation of the employability to certain factors (e.g. country of origin, field of studies). Moreover, this chapter is aiming to represent how satisfied the respondents were with their employment and what they would define as the major obstacles for their employment. However, it is advisable to begin the data description with the overview of the respondents' profile.

4.1. Gender, age

For the purposes of the current research, the thesis applies the age cohorts used in the VALOA project for presenting the description of the survey on foreign graduate students' employability in Finland: 24 and younger, 25-29, 30-34, 35 and older. The division by such cohorts suits better than by average age for a number of reasons. In 2017, the average age of the Bachelor's degree graduate student both in Finland and Sweden. For Master's students it is 28 and 32 and 30 in Finland and Sweden respectively (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2020). Therefore, starting with the age of 28, a significant age cohort of the ones younger than 28 will be ignored. Moreover, this thesis focuses on the international graduate students coming from countries where the average graduate's year can vary significantly what makes this division reasonable.

The gender ratio for respondents coming from both countries is well balanced: out of the total number of 22 respondents from Finland 11 are Male (50%) and out of 21 respondents from Sweden 9 are Male (approx. 41%).

Figure 14. Gender and age, Finland (n=22)

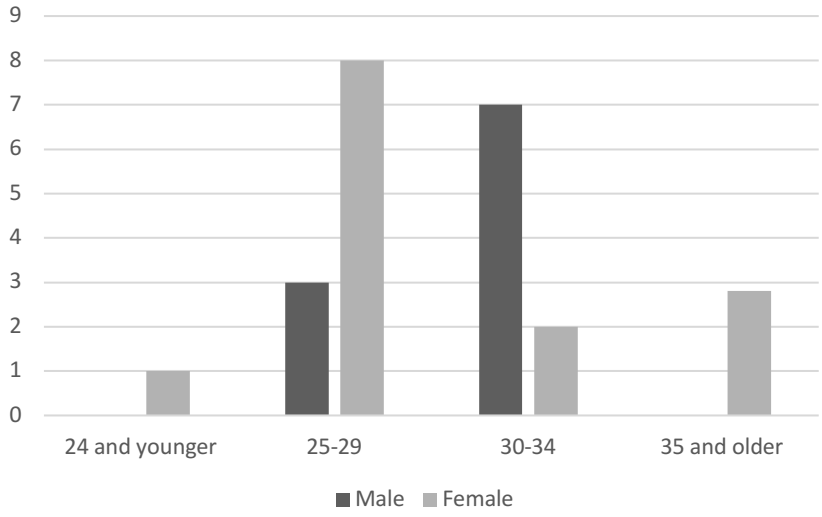
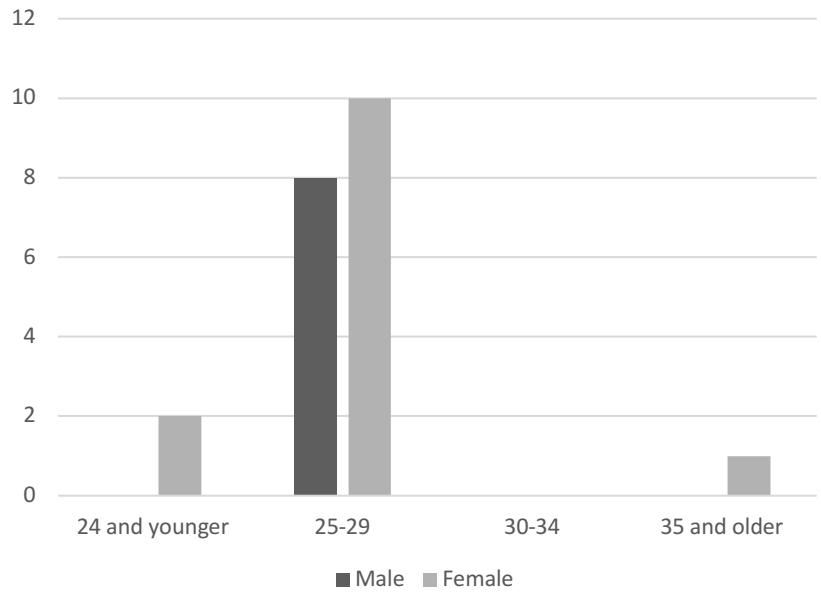


Figure 15. Gender and age, Sweden (n=21)

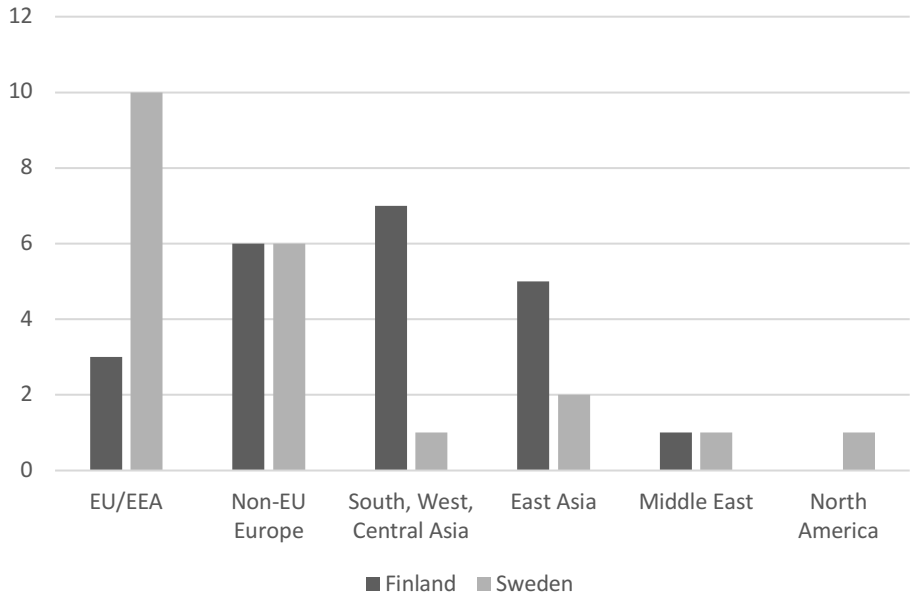


As the graphs above illustrates, the majority of the respondents in both countries belong to the 25-29 age cohort, and the age pattern for the Finnish respondents is a little more varied than for the Swedish ones where the absolute majority (approx. 86%) are in the same age group.

4.2. Country of origin

In this thesis, there is no restriction on the country of origin for the respondents: both graduate students from and outside EU/ EEA have been asked to complete the questionnaire as, regardless the level of complexion of the immigration procedures (both in terms of arriving to the country for studies and staying there after graduation), EU citizens tend to have similar problems to the ones the students outside EU have in the process of integrating into the labour market. Therefore, figure 16 below represents the distribution by the region of origin among the respondents both from Finland and Sweden.

Figure 16. Distribution of respondents by home region



From the graph it is obvious that the majority of the respondents (30%) come from EU/EEA countries, second largest group belongs to the non-EU/EEA European countries (28%) and the third major group is the citizens of South, West and Central Asia (19%). Among these, the most respondents coming from non-EU/EEA countries were born either in Ukraine (50%) or Russia (42%). Another most populous groups by the country of origin were the graduate students from Bangladesh (5 respondents) and from Vietnam (5 respondents). Respondents with EU/EEA citizenship come from different countries, and no particular trend can be traced.

4.3. Higher education institution and degree program

For this research, both the respondents graduating from the universities and universities of applied sciences have participated the survey, and no restrictions were set to the degree obtained.

Figure 17. Distribution of respondents by higher education institution in Finland

Institution	No. of respondents
University of Turku	11
Åbo Akademi University	2

University of Helsinki	2
University of Jyväskylä	2
Centria University of Applied Sciences	1
University of Eastern Finland	1
Lab University of Applied Sciences	1
University of Oulu	1
Häme University of Applied Sciences	1

Although the overall majority of the respondents graduated from the University of Turku, there is still a big variety in regard to the institution the respondents identified as the one they have obtained their degree from. However, there is much less representativeness among the respondents from Sweden: all of them have graduated from one of the following major institutions: Lund University, Uppsala University and University of Gothenburg.

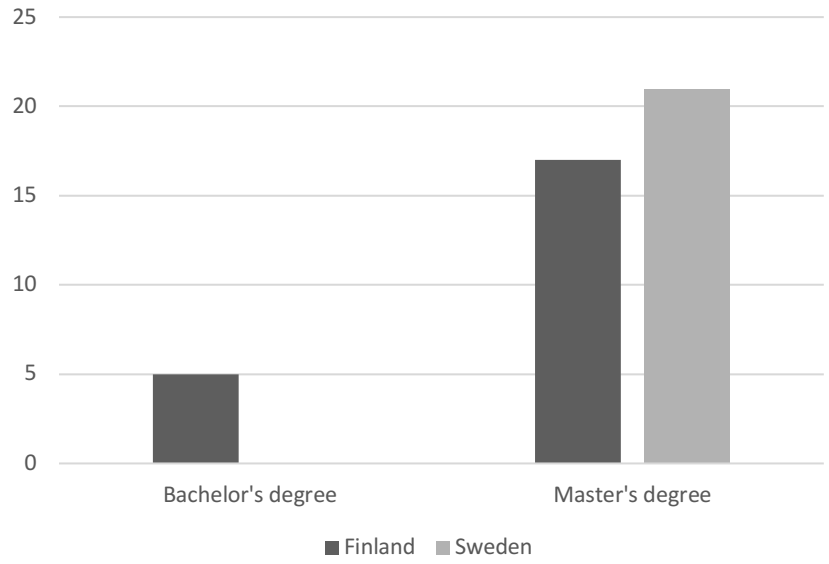
Figure 18. Distribution of respondents by higher education institution in Sweden

Institution	**No. Of respondents**
Lund University	14
Uppsala University	5
University of Gothenburg	2

Speaking of the degree the respondents obtained, the majority identified Master's degree, much less identified they received a Bachelor's degree (and none among Swedish respondents) and none received PhD degree neither in Finland nor Sweden. The graph

below provides a more detailed look on the proportions of the respondents by degree obtained.

Figure 19. Distribution by the level of studies



Despite a considerably low response rate for the current paper, there still can be found a reason for such proportion: in fact, there is a quite small number of Bachelor's degrees in Finland that are offered in English, especially at the universities. Therefore, the majority of the respondent who have received their Bachelor's degree identified that they graduated from the university of applied sciences (60%) where more degrees in English are offered.

Speaking of the enrolment and graduation year, the majority of the Finnish respondents started their education before the Finnish authorities introduced the tuition fee for the non-EU/EEA citizens (73%). All Swedish respondents, on the contrary, were enrolled after the introduction of the fees.

Figure 20. Distribution of respondents by enrolment year

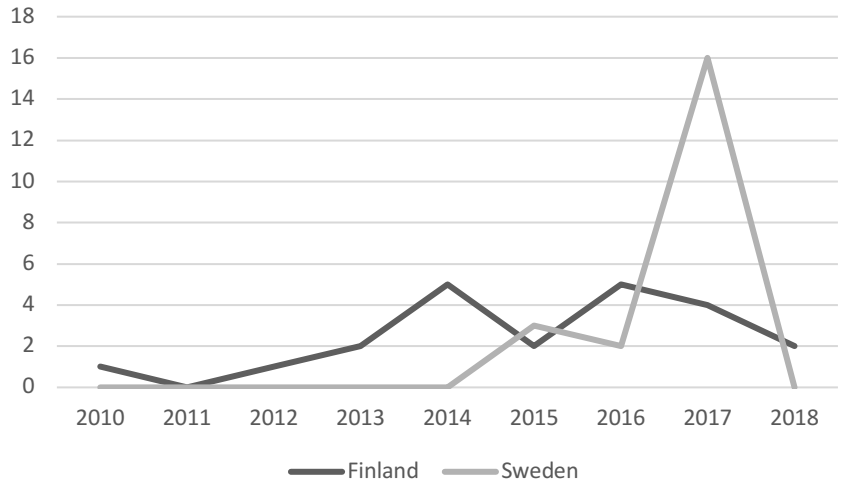
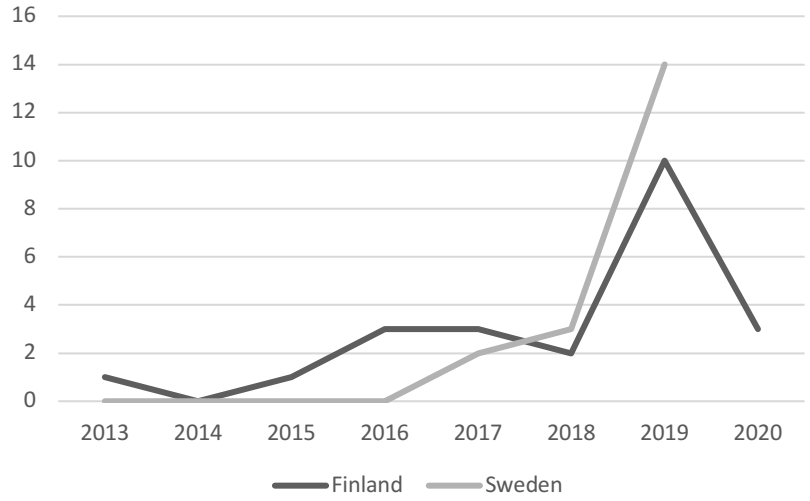


Figure 21. Distribution of respondents by graduation year

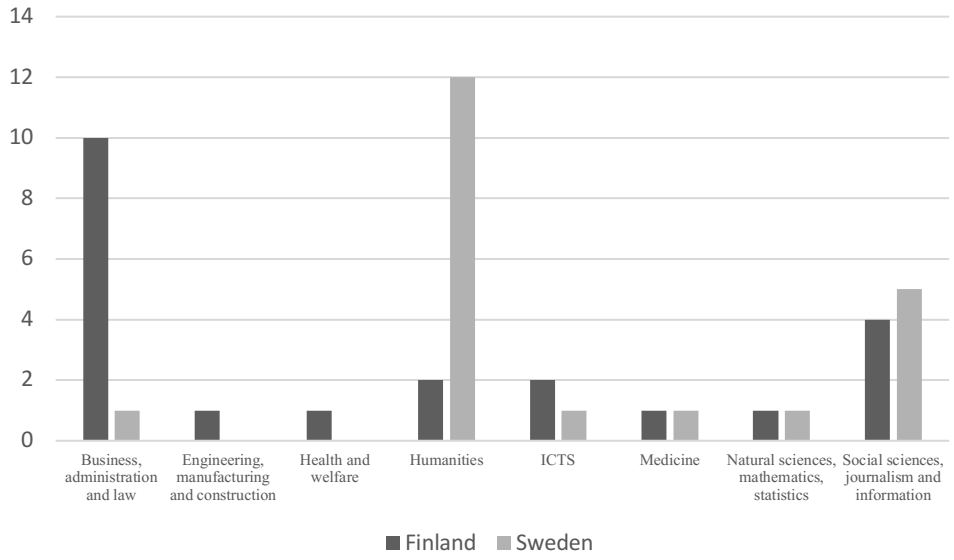


Moreover, the graphs show that the absolute majority of the respondents were enrolled in the academic year 2017 and graduated in 2019.

4.4. Study field and language of instruction

Although the respondents have graduated from different kinds of higher education institutions, there can be traced a common tendency that the majority of graduates from Finland of being enrolled in the study programme either in business, administration and law or social sciences. Swedish respondents are mostly graduates of either humanities or social sciences. The graph below shows a more detailed proportion by the study field.

Figure 22. Distribution by the field of studies



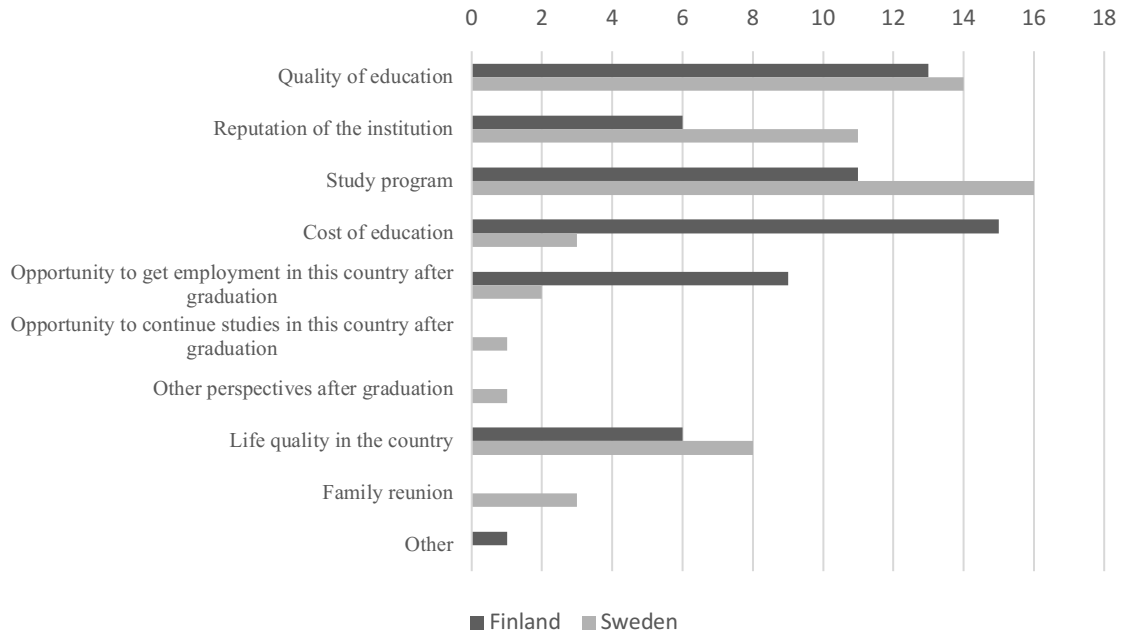
Almost all respondents have identified English being their language of instruction except one who has graduated from the University of Turku and who studied in Finnish. None of the respondents in both countries had Swedish as the language of instruction.

4.5. Reasons for choosing the country for degree studies

In the questionnaire, the respondents have been asked to identify if Finland/ Sweden was the 1st priority destination for having the degree studies. As the result, 41% Finnish respondents named another country as a preferred destination: the UK (3 respondents), Germany (2), Australia, Canada, Singapore and Sweden. Only 19% Swedish respondents wanted to study in a different country: Hungary, Netherlands, the UK, the USA.

In addition, the respondents had to choose three main motivations to arrive at Finland/ Sweden for studying, and the graph below shows the proportion of their responses.

Figure 23. Reasons for choosing the country for degree studies



As can be seen from the graph, the most popular motivations for studying either in Finland or Sweden are:

- Quality of education (23% of the total number)
- Study program (23%)
- Cost of education (15%)
- Reputation of the institution (14%)

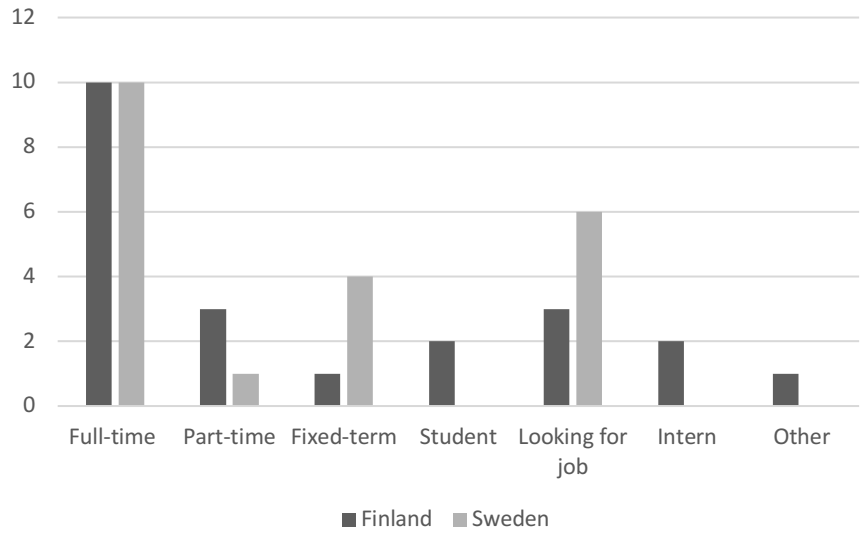
It is also interesting how the motivations are distributed by country. Thus, the cost of education seems to be a crucial one for the Finnish respondents but not for the Swedish ones (15 responses against 3) as well as the opportunity to get employment in this country after graduation (9 responses against 2). The study programme and family reunion, in turn, were more important for the respondents from Sweden on the stage of their decision-making in favour of Sweden (16 responses against 11 and 3 against none respectively).

4.6. Information on employment

Before speaking on whether the respondents managed to obtain employment or not, it is important to check if the respondent have considered finding an employment in the country prior to their arrival for studies. According to the data collected through the questionnaire, four graduates from Finland said they didn't think of it against one from Sweden, and only one Finnish respondent has identified that he didn't consider it at all.

The majority of the respondents managed to get employment in both countries: the employment rate for the Finnish graduates is 77% and for the Swedish it is 71%. Important to notice that the salaried PhD position in this thesis is considered a fixed-term employment.

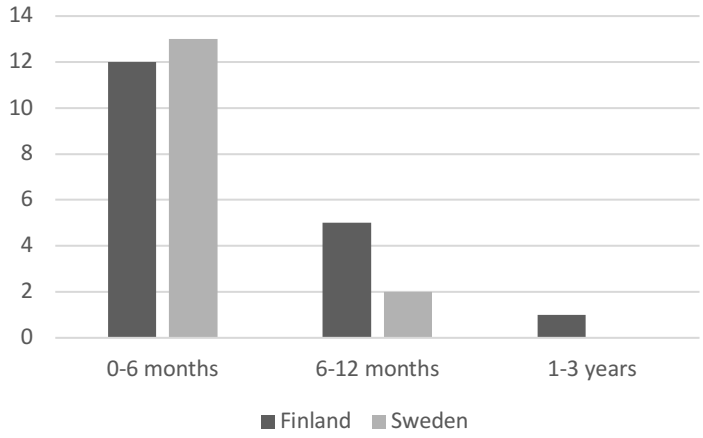
Figure 24. Type of employment



Another interesting factor worth keeping in mind is the place of employment. The majority of the employed respondents found a job in the country of their studies (86% Finnish respondents and 57% Swedish ones). Graduates from Finland moved to Belgium, Russia or home country for their employment. Swedish graduates found employment in Belgium (2 respondents), Denmark, Norway and their home country too (5 respondents).

One factor that can help us understand how complicated the job-seeking process was is the time it took for the respondents to find the job. The graph below shows a distribution of the responses.

Figure 25. Time to employment



From the graph it is clear that the majority of the respondents (76%) managed to find employment within 0-6 months and 21% of them in the time of 6-12 months.

Since the respondents originate from different regions, it would be good to know how employment rate varies depending on the home region. The graph below reveals that the highest employment rate is among respondents from EU/EEA or East Asian countries (95% and 90% respectively).

Figure 26. Employment rate by home region

Home region	**Finland**		**Sweden**	
	Employed	From total number	Employed	From total number
EU/EEA	3	100%	9	90%
East Asia	4	80%	2	100%
Non-EU Europe	3	50%	4	67%
South, West, Central Asia	6	86%	-	0%
Middle East	1	100%	-	0%
North America	-	-	-	0%

4.7. Human capital impact on employability

Researching employability of recent graduates, it is important to relate the results to the concept of human capital as the studies always lead to the human capital accumulation (e.g. qualification, degree, language skills, network). Therefore, it is advisable to track how the employment rate was impacted by a certain factor. Here, probably the most significant factor determining the course of human capital development for a particular respondent is his/her field of studies as it provides an individual not only with degree but also with qualification and the set of soft skills that clearly play a significant role in employment. The graph below shows distribution of responses categorised by the field of studies.

Figure 27. Employment rate by the field of studies

Field of studies	**Finland**		**Sweden**	
	Employed	From total number	Employed	From total number
Business, administration and law	7	70%	1	100%
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	1	100%	-	-
Health and welfare	1	100%	-	-
Humanities	2	100%	9	75%
Information and communication technologies (ICTS)	2	100%	-	0%
Medicine	1	100%	1	100%
Natural sciences, mathematics, statistics	-	0%	1	100%
Social sciences, journalism and information	3	75%	3	60%

Language skills probably expose the central factor that determines how successful the job-seeking process can be for a foreign graduate student. Therefore, all respondents were

asked to identify their language skills what makes it possible to track if this factor is significant for the employment or not. The table below shows the percentage of employed respondents by the level of language proficiency following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) that recognises 6 levels from A1 (corresponding to beginner level) to C2 (proficient speaker). A dash mark "-" in the table means that no respondents had this level of proficiency while "0%" means that none of the respondents with this level of proficiency managed to gain employment.

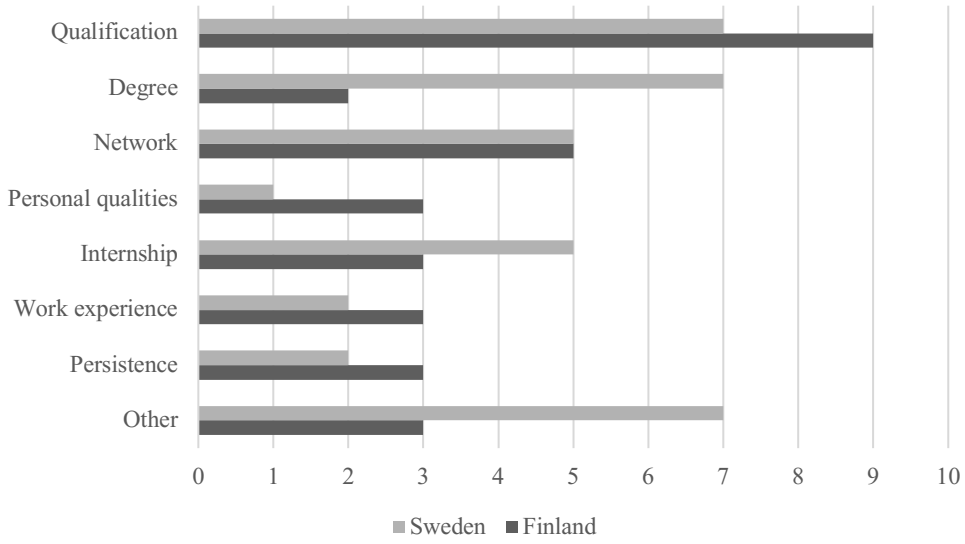
Figure 28. Employment rate by language proficiency (Finland/Sweden)

Language	**Employment rate by level of language proficiency**						
	None	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
English	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	100%/-	78%/57%	75%/78%
Finnish	100%/-	100%/-	100%/-	71%/-	50%/-	0%/-	-/-
Swedish	76%/100%	100%/80%	-/60%	50%/40%	-/100%	-/100%	-/100%

Since almost all respondents studied in Finland and Sweden in English, none of them have reported having English below B2 level as it is the minimum level required for studying at the university in English. Therefore, there is no data regarding the employment of students with English skills lower B2.

In addition to language proficiency estimation, all respondents were asked to identify in free form as a response to an open-ended question what they think helped them find an employment. Despite the wide range of different answers, the majority of them can generally fit into several major categories. Their distribution showed below.

Figure 29. Factors that helped to find an employment



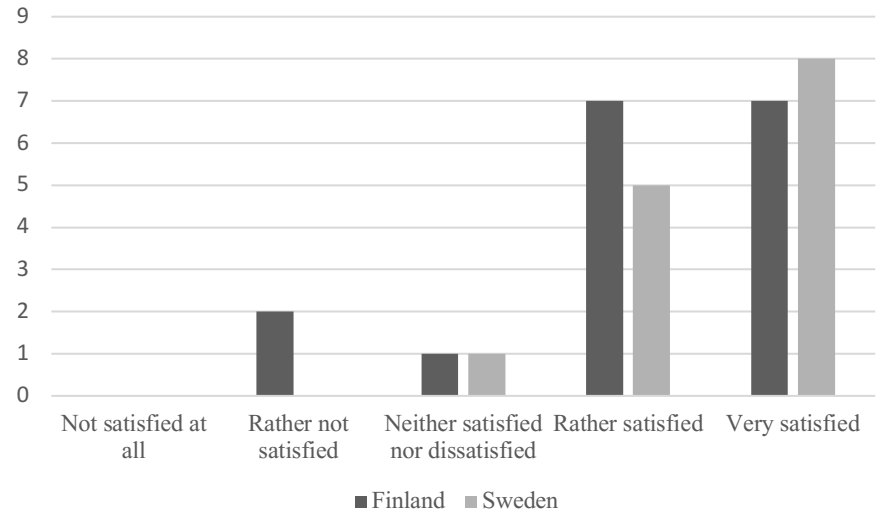
As other factors, the respondents referred to several other factors that, in their opinion, stimulated their employment. Finnish respondents said that such aspects as knowledge of other languages, quality of the PhD project and knowing the desired career path early, as well as knowing how to move towards it and start doing it as soon as possible. The Swedish respondents, in turn, mentioned such factors as: knowledge of languages, relevant PhD project, knowledge of Swedish language, active participation in extra-curricular activities as the ones that they benefitted from in the context of gaining employment.

4.8. Satisfaction with employment

Finding and maintaining the employment, however, is not the only aspect that is worth keeping in mind when analysing the employment of the recent graduates. The respondents' satisfaction with the job as well as its relevance to the obtained degree are important for spotting the possible mismatch or overqualification.

Firstly, the respondents rated their satisfaction with employment using a five-point scale from "Not satisfied at all" to "Very satisfied". Distribution of the answers can be found below.

Figure 30. Satisfaction with employment



The graph above portrays that the majority of interviewed graduates are satisfied with their employment (87%) with more respondents being "very satisfied with it" rather than "rather satisfied".

After that, the respondents had to rate the relevance of their employment to the level of their degree and the field of studies from 0 to 4 starting with "Not relevant" and finishing with "Completely relevant". The absolute majority of the graduates identified that their employment is relevant to the level of their studies both in Finland and Sweden.

Figure 31. Relevance of the employment to the level of studies

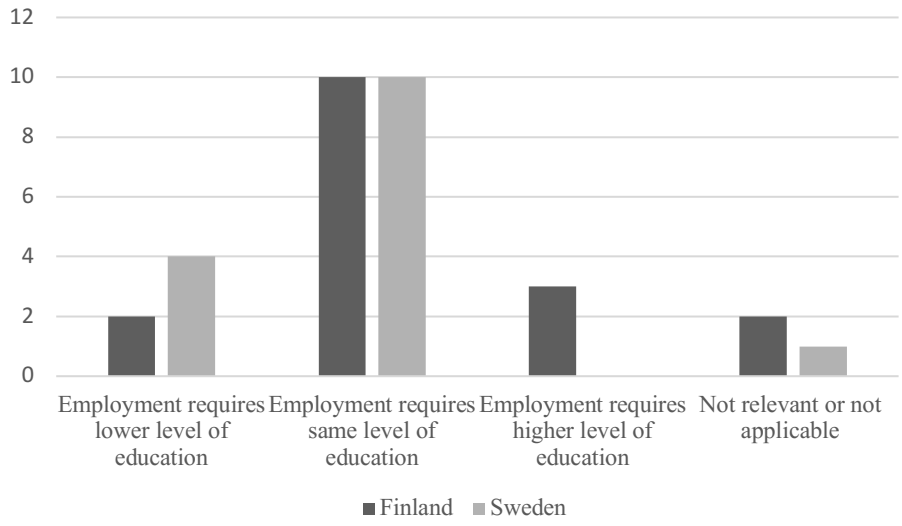
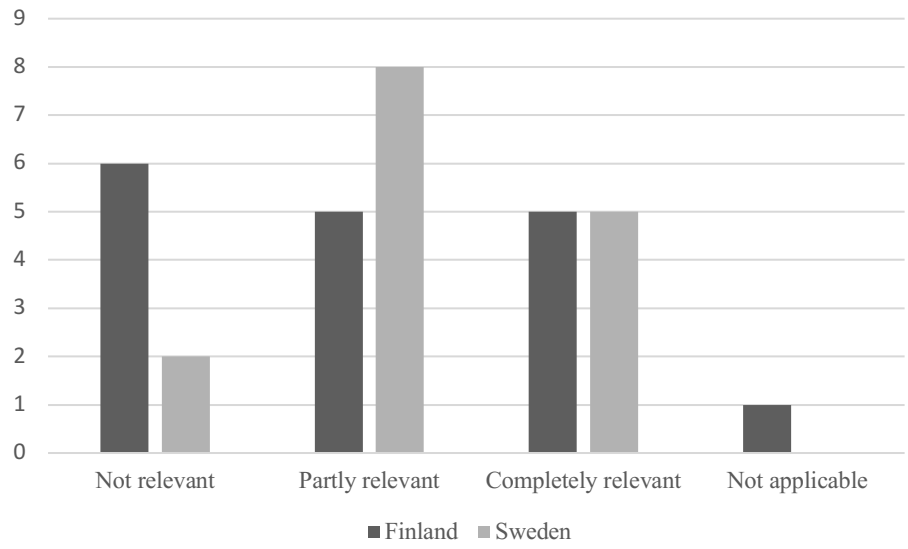


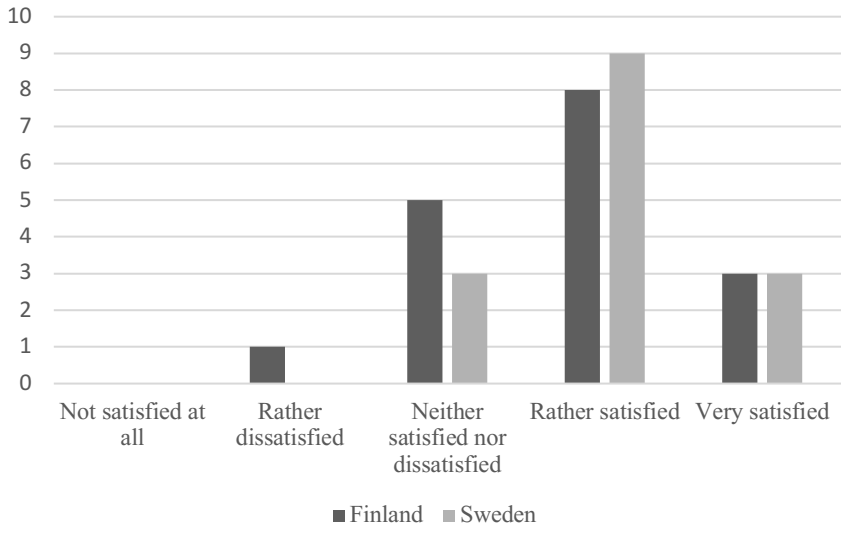
Figure 32. Relevance of the employment to the field of studies



Summarising the data from the bar chart above, the conclude can be drawn that the majority of the interviewed graduates reported their employment being relevant to the field of their studies in Finland and Sweden (40% partly relevant, 31% completely relevant and only 25% think it is not relevant at all). In other words, the data collected through questionnaire did reveal the mismatch between academic field, level of studies and the employment the respondents obtained. However, its percentage is lower than the one of those who work in a corresponding area.

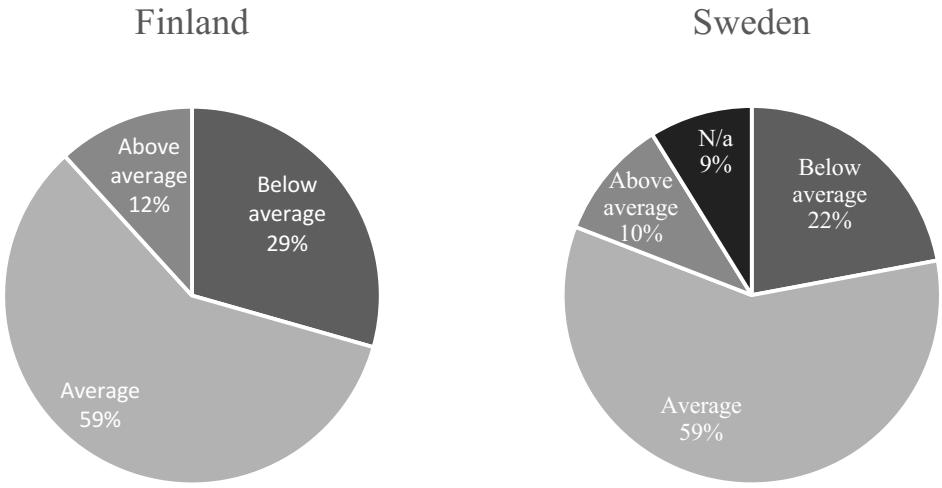
Another factor worth looking upon in the analysis is the respondents' satisfaction with their salary and how it relates to the average one in their area. This can help us understand if they become less paid than in average and if it affects their satisfaction with the salary in general. Below is the graph showing statistics on the distribution of answers to these questions.

Figure 33. Satisfaction with the salary



Graph 34 shows that the absolute majority of the respondents reported being "rather satisfied" with the salary they receive (53%) and only one respondent was "rather dissatisfied" with it.

Figure 34. How big is the salary compared to an average in the field

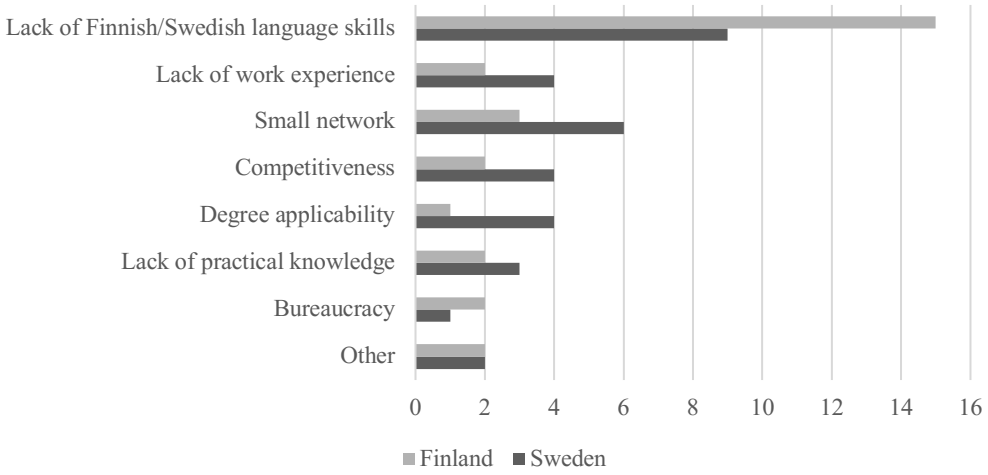


The charts above show the majority of the respondents (59% in both countries) consider their salary being average in their field. However, quite high percentage of the graduates (29% in Finland and 22% in Sweden respectively) believe their salary is lower.

4.9. Challenges and advice to increase the chance of employment

In the free form the respondents reported of what they consider as the major challenges for their employment. The most answers can also fit into several categories, but some cannot and therefore will be represented below the graph 35.

Figure 35. Major challenges for the employment



Despite a range of different factors that, according to the respondents, challenged their employment, the majority agree that the most significant aspect that made the employment more complicated was lack of Finnish or Swedish language skills (40% of the total number). However, it is also interesting to see what other challenges were named as the most significant ones by the respondents. Some mentioned the employers' reluctance in hiring foreign specialists due to a number of possible complications (e.g. long hiring process because of the more complex bureaucratic procedures), some were complaining on having a quite limited (and hence insufficient) knowledge of the local labour market (e.g. cultural differences) or on a restricted number of positions for the foreign specialists in particular fields (such as political studies, international relations). Moreover, some graduates find it challenging looking for job when they receive no feedback from the employer on such matters as, for example, why they have not been successful for a particular position.

In addition, quite many respondents (approximately 30% of total number) stressed that despite internationalisation of the labour market in both countries is on the top of the agenda for many years already, it is still quite hard to convert their international work

experience for the local employers who would prefer to have an applicant with proved experience in the country of the employer.

In addition, the respondents were asked to give some advice to other international degree students in Finland and Sweden to ease their job-seeking process. As before, most answers have repetitive advices that fit into one category, some, however, don't and therefore will be discussed after the graph. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents who gave a particular recommendation in both countries.

Figure 36. Recommendations to other international degree students to increase employability (Finland/Sweden)

Recommendation	Responses	Recommendation	Responses
Learn Finnish/Swedish	16% / 21%	**Take part in extra-curricular activities**	7% / 7%
Invest in networking	21% / 9%	**Be determined**	-/ 12%
Find an internship	9% / 16%	**Research the labour market**	-/ 6%
Be pro-active	9% / 9%	**Find a more applicable agree**	-/ 6%
Gain work experience	7% / 9%	**Look for a job outside your field**	2% / 6%
Apply for a relevant position	9% / -	**Write a good PhD proposal**	2% / 2%
Learn more	6% / 7%	**Other**	6% / 6%

Among other recommendations that were mentioned by the respondents were: staying alert to job opportunities and not to lose focus, have faith in yourself and your skills, start reaching out to the employers as soon as possible, and finally, find another country for job-seeking.

5. Discussion

This chapter aims to bring up a summary of the most significant findings of the analysis of the governmental policies, their implementations and the labour integration strategies in both countries: how similar and/ or different they are, what could be named as the regional peculiarities and what are the major development trends. After that, it is advisable to share the findings of the analysis of the data collected through questionnaire and present major conclusions.

These chapters will be followed by the discussion of the limitations that had been encountered in the process of thesis-writing and suggestions for further research on related topic.

5.1. Key findings in analysing higher education, study immigration policies and labour market integration services in Finland and Sweden

5.1.1. Higher education policies in Finland and Sweden

The Bologna process that both Finland and Sweden alongside with 46 other countries participate in, massively affect the course of the development of the higher education policies. For this reason, the higher education system in both countries is uniformed: it has three cycles of education (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral), uniformed ECTS system and diploma supplement templates.

Another similarity is that both countries actively promote their higher education for international students and create conditions for them (e.g. international degree programs, services in English). Despite that, both countries introduced tuition fees for the students outside EU/EEA (2011 in Sweden, 2016 in Finland) that affected the number of the students coming from this area.

However, in order to encourage the students outside EU/EEA to arrive for studies, both countries developed a scholarship system that would support them and ease the financial burden. In Sweden, the international students have two sources they can hypothetically receive funding from: within the university they are planning to study at and outside of it (with Swedish Institute being the most influential governmental agency providing financial support to the students outside EU/EEA). Scholarships offered by the Swedish universities are more restrictive than the ones offered by the higher education institutions in Finland: in order to be eligible for such scholarship, the applicant has to have this

higher education institution as the 1st priority in the application system (Study Admissions). Therefore, technically the students can apply only for one such scholarship. Currently Finland doesn't have a generic application system like the one in Sweden so the students can apply to as many scholarships in Finland as they want. Moreover, there is currently no agency in Finland that would be equivalent to the Swedish Institute, and the students have to sustain financial support either through the university or other external sources.

5.1.2. Study immigration policies in Finland and Sweden

Both Sweden and Finland are EU countries that are members of the Schengen agreement. For this regard, the study immigration regulations are almost identical: the EU/ EEA citizens wishing to stay in the country for more than 90 days have to register their right of residence in a respective authority and non- EU/EEA citizens have to obtain a residence permit for the stays over 90 days.

The general entry requirements set up by the migration authorities in Sweden are similar to the ones in Finland: to be admitted to a full-time degree program, to have a comprehensive health insurance and sufficient funds for the full period of studies (8 514 SEK (approx. 804 EUR) per month in Sweden or 560 EUR per month for the studies in Finland). After the completion of the degree, both countries allow the non-EU residents to apply for the visa for the job-seeking: 6 months maximum in Sweden and 12 months in Finland.

From analysing the immigration policies, there can be seen a lot in common between both countries: immigration regulations, visa requirements and permit to stay in the country for job-seeking purposes. Speaking of the study immigration, it is also important to mention that the introduction of the tuition fees in both countries immediately affected the number of non-EU/EEA students: the statistics from the migration authorities of both countries documented a 50% decrease in the residence permits granted for the study purposes on the next year after the tuition fees came into force. Since the overall number of the international students didn't change as significantly as the number of residence permits, the conclusion can be drawn that more students from EU/EEA countries started arriving.

Despite the active promotion and available support schemes for the students, it would be an overstatement to conclude that the higher education in Sweden and Finland is equally

inclusive for the students outside EU/EEA as it is for the students from within. In order to be eligible for the study residence permit, these students have to document having either 6 720 EUR per year (for studies in Finland) or 9 648 EUR (for studies in Sweden) on their bank account, pay the tuition fee and carry all necessary expenses related to the immigration process. For an average student coming from a country with average income being much lower than in Finland or Sweden such expenses can be too heavy and therefore, higher education in these countries in general can be seen as a prerogative of the students who enjoy a more privileged background. This is, however, not applicable to the EU/EEA students who are exempt of paying tuition fees, immigration fees and will only need to sustain themselves a decent living for the period of studies (e.g. have 6 720 EUR/ 9 648 EUR for the academic year or find a part-time job that would cover the living costs). Due to this circumstance, it is obvious that the EU/EEA students are rather less restricted by the study immigration procedures compared to their colleagues from outside the area.

5.1.3. Labour market integration services for the international students

The majority of the labour integration services primarily focus on two major aspects: providing the immigrants with a substantial language course and familiarising them with the peculiarities of the national labour market. This statement is true for both Sweden and Finland.

In Sweden, those who want to attend a free Swedish language course can either do it through Folkuniversitetet, local municipality or university. Similar to Sweden, in Finland, they can attend Finnish language courses through home municipality, university but also through the Centre for Employment, Economic Development and Transport (TE-toimisto) and their workplace.

Folkuniversitetet in Sweden is also responsible for arranging the courses introducing the local labour market to the foreign nationals, it is a central organisation that provides the services specifically aimed at increasing the labour market integration of the immigrants. In Finland, most services are organised through TE-toimisto and municipal organisations. Both structures host individually tailored courses that help the immigrants to be aware of the job opportunities that would fit their profile.

Moreover, Sweden also supports the international job-seekers financially by providing subsidies to their employer for a particular period of time what currently doesn’t exist in

Finland. However, the Finnish authorities run the Talent Boost project aiming to attract highly-skilled and talented immigrants and support them during the first stages of the integration process.

The services provided at the university level in Sweden vary from institution to institution. Furthermore, in higher education institutions the respondents for this thesis graduated from (Lund University, University of Gothenburg, Uppsala University), it is normally the faculties' responsibility to provide the career services aimed particularly at the students of their field. University-wide services would mostly be limited with a generic job board, consulting on CV-writing, internship opportunities and thesis project.

Finnish universities, on the contrary, mostly offer the career services aimed at students of all fields but would be similar to the ones offered by the Swedish higher education institutions: CV clinics, job fairs, internship advising and theses project consulting. Moreover, the university career services at the Finnish universities monitor the employability of their graduates by sending them out questionnaires and compiling the collected data into one generic database. Such measures help them being aware of the average employment rate among their graduates and improve the available services if needed.

Moreover, both in Sweden and Finland the students can take an intensive language course at their home university either as the obligatory part of the programme or voluntarily, as an elective course.

5.2. Key findings in analysing the data

The questionnaire data analysis showed that almost all respondents graduated from a Master's degree program, both in Finland and in Sweden from such study fields like business, administration and law (45% Finnish respondents), humanities (57% Swedish respondents), social studies, journalism and information (18% Finnish respondents and 23% Swedish). Almost all of them considered finding employment in the country of their studies after graduation. This means they were considering their degree as a possible route of obtaining the employment.

Reasonings behind choosing Finland or Sweden as the destination for degree studies slightly varied among respondents from Finland and Sweden: Finnish respondents were more likely to identify such factors as cost of education (69%) and opportunity to find

employment in the country after graduation (40%) as the decisive rather than the respondents from Sweden what relates to the 2005 report that identified same reasoning among respondents from Finland in choosing this country for studies (Kärki 2005). The latter, in turn, more favoured the study program (76%), quality of education (67%) and the reputation of the institution (52%) as the factors that won over their decision. The reason for it is simple: almost 50% of the Swedish respondents originates from EU/EEA countries so the cost of education will not matter for them as it will for non-EU citizens, and they can prioritise other factors over the financial ones. Finnish respondents, on the contrary, mostly come from outside EU/EEA (86%) and therefore are more limited in terms of the choice of the study place.

Most of the questioned respondents in both countries managed to find employment, the majority has a full-timer employment that they managed to obtain within 0-6 months of the job search. However, it was also revealed that compared to Finland, more respondents have identified having a fixed-term contract and more graduates from Sweden were still in the process of looking for a job. It was also visible that the best employment rate in both countries was among the respondents from EU/EEA (95%) and East Asia (90%).

During the analysis of the data, there has been made an attempt to track the relation of the field of studies the respondents have received degree in and the employment rate, however, this conclusion can be hypothetically false as the number of the respondents from various fields varies drastically in both countries what makes it impossible to come up with such conclusions.

The questionnaire was also designed to recognise the satisfaction with the employment. As the result, the majority of all respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with their job. Same with their salary expectations – 53% respondents are happy with their salary even though absolute majority of them receives an average salary in their field (59%).

Small mismatch between the level of education and employment has been revealed in the process of data analysis: though the majority identified their job requires same level of qualifications, 14 % believe a lower competence would be sufficient for the position they are currently occupying. Statistics on the field of studies mismatch is less positive: one quarter of the questioned graduates doesn’t think their current employment is relevant to the degree they have received.

Speaking of the major challenges, both Finnish (68%) and Swedish (43%) respondents identified lack of Finnish/ Swedish language skills as the most significant one even though it is clearly a bigger obstacle for the graduates from Finland. Small network was the second most popular answer (29% Swedish respondents, 14% Finnish) and lack of work experience and high competitiveness in the field took the third place with 19% Swedish respondents and 9% Finnish respectively. Interesting to see how different the identified obstacles are to the ones illustrated by the International Student Barometer study dated 2014. There, two out of three major challenges focused on systematic faults such as a) low interest in foreign employees (46%); and b) poor career opportunities in the field of their studies (45%) giving the third place to a language barrier (42%). Although the proportions vary, what has been articulated as "poor career opportunities in the field of studies" is to some extent similar to what is called in this thesis as "high competitiveness in the field" what makes the finding of this thesis relate to the findings of the previous research.

Accordingly, the most frequent advices the graduates gave to the other international graduate students in Finland and Sweden were: to learn Finnish/ Swedish language, invest in networking and find an internship. Other popular recommendation was to become pro-active in searching the job and gaining relevant work experience.

5.3. Limitations

The major limitations for the thesis apply to the process of data collection. On the initial stage, several Finnish and Swedish universities have been contacted in order to ask for some assistance or, if possible, existing databases/ career monitoring materials of the recent graduate students. Unfortunately, all Swedish universities were unresponsive, and the Finnish universities that responded to the request were not specifying in their survey the nationality of the respondents what made the data irrelevant for the current thesis. Therefore, alternative sources had to be found in order to collect quantitative data, and as the result, the questionnaires were distributed through the personal network.

This method of data collection, unfortunately, can't be considered as the most reliable one, as the respondents would most likely come from one social group like nationality, age, study field, home university. As the result, the respondents from Sweden are mostly graduates from Lund university, faculty of humanities and the respondents from Finland mostly studied in the University of Turku in the field of business, administration and law.

Such uneven distribution of responses significantly limits the extent to which a quantitative analysis of dependency of employability on certain factors can be performed (for example the employment rate by the field of studies). For this reason, the results that this thesis illustrates are more of preliminary type which is advisable to interpret from a more qualitative approach, by comparing the data from the respondents from Finland (mostly showcasing University of Turku) and Sweden (mostly from Lund University).

Another negative consequence of questionnaire distribution through the personal network is small representativeness of the sample since personal network is much more limited than, for example, alumni register of one university or faculty. The total number of respondents for both countries is 43 which heavily limits the range of options for the analysis. With a higher number of the respondents and deeper overall focus on statistical component in the thesis, there would be a great opportunity to use the method of linear regression and provide a deeper outlook on the way in which some factors affect employability of foreign graduate students.

Moreover, when analysing the career services offered in Swedish universities, it was an unfortunate discovery that generic services are quite limited while the majority of the services are offered through particular faculties. As the result, most information on the available services are published on the internal webpage and are hidden from the eyes of the external visitors. For this reason, the description of these facilities in this thesis is limited.

5.4. Suggestions for further research

This topic possesses a great variety of options of further research due to its multidimensional character. Comparative perspective brings up even more aspects for further analysis.

Firstly, as mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, with a more focus on statistical data and greater representativeness it would be worth implementing linear regression and hence providing a more substantial analysis of the factors affecting the graduates' employability in Finland and Sweden.

Secondly, it would be advisable to narrow down the focus of comparison and investigate employability of the foreign graduates from one study field (e.g. humanities or business, administration and law) or, if possible, from almost similar study programmes. This will

deepen the understanding of how applicable the obtained degree is to the national labour market and how it helps the graduates to find a relevant job in this field. The comparison, in this case, can be either held between universities in different countries or inside one.

Thirdly, with more focus on services provided by universities, it would be valuable to focus primarily on the satisfaction of the graduates with the study curriculum, extra-curricular services, support and guidance and how they helped obtaining an employment or continuing studies.

Finally, the prospective research should provide recommendations for the governmental authorities and higher education institutions in Finland and Sweden as well as for the foreign degree students on increasing the probability of finding employment in Finland and Sweden.

As said earlier, the topic possesses a great potential for further investigation and could shed a light on a number of aspects that directly influence the students' employability and the overall satisfaction with job-seeking experience.

6. Conclusion

As the result of the performed work, there has been made an advancement in understanding of the problem of foreign graduates' employability in Sweden and Finland and how it has been supported by the local policies. The analysis of the higher education policies has revealed that both countries actively promote internationalisation of higher education and encourage foreign students to arrive for studies. At the same time, both countries aim to increase competitiveness of national higher education what justified the introduction of tuition fees in 2011 in Sweden and in 2016 in Finland and immediately affected the number of non-EU/EEA students enrolled. Even though both Finnish and Swedish government support talented students with fee-waivers and in exceptional cases with scholarships covering living expenses, the proportions of EU/ non-EU students have still been affected. Current study migration regulations in both countries are alike and do not possess a significant obstacle for the applicants but can be an additional challenge for non-EU students on the way to the country and can therefore also turn some of them aside.

Both integration services on national and institutional (i.e. university) levels primarily focus on two major directions of training: language courses or tailored courses on available job opportunities for a particular individual. Since the majority of the respondents from both countries of this thesis identified lack of language being the most significant challenge for employment, such services should be quite useful for integrating the foreigners successfully. Third most popular obstacle among respondents was lack of work experience – something all universities across Europe and abroad have managed to find a way to tackle – can be mitigated during the studies by finding an internship that would partly or completely correspond to the study field. As quarter of questioned graduates from Sweden reported, internship effectively helped them gaining their current employment, so it looks like an efficient measure on introducing the students to the labour market while they are still studying. However, another significant challenge – small network looks like a problem demanding more attention and further actions as it can be problematic to find a universal solution for it.

The responses' analysis has revealed that 67% of the respondents managed to obtain employment after their graduation. The absolute majority are employed full-time and approximately 21% of the interviewed graduates were still looking for job (two thirds of them have graduated in Sweden). In general, the employment rate among Finnish respondents is slightly higher: 77% against 71% among Swedish respondents which, predominantly, tends to be quite positive numbers.

In this thesis, it was difficult to detect a connection between field of studies and employment due to the reasons stated previously or between language skills and employment. However, the mismatch between field of studies and area of employment has been revealed, and especially visible one was among respondents from Finland (almost one third reported employment being not relevant at all). Mismatch between level of education and employment also took place but not as explicitly as between field of studies.

Qualification was the most popular factor that, according to the respondents from both countries, helped finding employment (37%), degree and internship were more commonly named by Swedish respondents and personal qualities, work experience and pro-active attitude were more favoured by respondents from Finland.

Finally, 87% of all respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with their current employment, with a minor variation in responses between countries. Satisfaction with received salary is also high: only one respondent from Finland wasn't happy with the size of the pay.

As the result, both countries are undergoing similar processes in regard to study immigration, its promotion and regulation and, what is more, despite minor variations, graduates documented quite high employment rate and satisfaction with obtained employment what makes both countries an attractive destination for studies and further employment.

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Appendix 1

Employability of Foreign Graduate Students in Finland

Hello,

My name is Nataliia Strukova, I am a Master degree student at the University of Turku and I am

approaching you because I am collecting data for my Master Thesis investigating the question of

employability of foreign graduate students in Finland and Sweden. To make this research happen, I am now asking your co-operation by answering this short questionnaire. This is not going to take more than 5 minutes of your time but will definitely be an extremely useful source of information. The topic I am writing about is under-researched, and information gained through similar questionnaires can help future foreign students be better integrated into labour market in Finland or Sweden.

This research aims to clarify how foreign graduate students in Finland or Sweden get employed and how satisfied they are with their employment in general.

The target group for this research is the international graduate students from one of Finnish or Swedish universities.

Your answers will be processed anonymously and only for the purposes of this Master Thesis, the results will be mostly reviewed statistically so it will not be possible to identify the respondents. No third parties will have access to this data.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail: nataliia.n.strukova@utu.fi

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary

2. Year of birth

3. Country of origin

4. Native language (-s)

5. Institution you graduated from

- Aalto University
- Arcada University of Applied Sciences
- Centria University of Applied Sciences
- Diaconia University of Applied Sciences
- Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences
- Hanken School of Economics
- Humak University of Applied Sciences
- Häme University of Applied Sciences
- JAMK University of Applied Sciences
- Kajaani University of Applied Sciences
- Karelia University of Applied Sciences
- LAB University of Applied Sciences
- LUT University Lapland University of Applied Sciences
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences
- Metropolia University of Applied Sciences
- Novia University of Applied Sciences
- Oulu University of Applied Sciences
- Satakunta University of Applied Sciences
- Savonia University of Applied Sciences
- Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences
- South-Eastern University University of Applied Sciences
- TAMK University of Applied Sciences
- Tampere University
- Turku University of Applied Sciences
- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Helsinki
- University of Jyväskylä
- University of Lapland
- University of Oulu
- University of Turku
- University of Vaasa
- University of the Arts Helsinki
- Vaasa University of Applied Sciences
- Åbo Akademi University
- Other, specify

6. Enrolment year

7. Graduation year

8. Language of instruction

- o Finnish
- o Swedish
- o English
- o Other

9. Was Finland your first priority destination?

- o Yes
- o No

10. If not, what was your first priority?

Please, specify

11. When choosing Finland as destination for your studies, have you considered the option of

staying here and finding job after graduation?

- o Yes
- o No
- o Didn't think of it

12. Reason for choosing Finland as the destination for your studies (choose three most important)

Quality of education
Reputation of the institution
Study program
Cost of education
Opportunity to get employment in this country after graduation
Opportunity to continue studies in this country after graduation
Other perspectives after graduation
Life quality in this country
Family reunion
Other, please specify

13. Level of studies completed in Finland

- o Vocational
- o Bachelor
- o Master
- o Doctoral

14. Field of studies

- o Arts
- o Business, administration and law
- o Education
- o Engineering, manufacturing and construction

- Health and welfare
- Humanities
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICTS)
- Medicine
- Natural sciences, mathematics, statistics
- Services (military science, sport science)
- Social sciences, journalism and information

15. Language proficiency

	None	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Native
Finnish	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Swedish	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
English	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

16. Full-time work experience prior to graduation

- 0-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-3 years
- 3 years and more

17. Current employment status

NB: Please consider salaried PhD position as a full-time employment and non-salaried as further studies

- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Fixed-term employment
- Looking for job
- Unemployed, not looking for job
- Intern
- Student
- Other, please specify ☐

18. If employed, where?

- Finland
- Home country
- Other, please specify ☐

19. If employed, how much time it took to gain employment?

- 0-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-3 years
- 3 years and more

20. How satisfied are you with your current employment?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not satisfied at all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very satisfied

21. How relevant is your employment to the level of your studies in Finland?

- o Employment requires lower level of qualification
- o Employment requires same level of qualification
- o Employment requires higher level of qualification
- o N/a or not sure

22. How relevant is your employment to the field of your studies in Finland?

- o Not relevant
- o Partly relevant
- o Completely relevant
- o N/a or not sure

23. How satisfied are you with your salary?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not satisfied at all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very satisfied

24. How big is your salary compared to an average in your field?

- o Below average
- o Average
- o Above average
- o N/a or not sure

25. What, do you think, helped you to get employed (e.g. qualification, network, degree project,

internship etc.)?

26. What would you define as major challenges for your employment?

27. What would you recommend fellow students to increase their chances of employment after graduation?

Appendix 2

Employability of Foreign Graduate Students in Sweden

Hello,

My name is Nataliia Strukova, I am a Master degree student at the University of Turku and I am approaching you because I am collecting data for my Master Thesis investigating the question of employability of foreign graduate students in Finland and Sweden. To make this research happen, I am now asking your co-operation by answering this short questionnaire. This is not going to take more than 5 minutes of your time but will definitely be an extremely useful source of information. The topic I am writing about is under-researched, and information gained through similar questionnaires can help future foreign students be better integrated into labour market in Finland or Sweden.

This research aims to clarify how foreign graduate students in Finland or Sweden get employed and how satisfied they are with their employment in general.

The target group for this research is the international graduate students from one of Finnish or Swedish universities.

Your answers will be processed anonymously and only for the purposes of this Master Thesis, the results will be mostly reviewed statistically so it will not be possible to identify the respondents. No third parties will have access to this data.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail: nataliia.n.strukova@utu.fi

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary

2. Year of birth

3. Country of origin

4. Native language (-s)

5. Institution you graduated from

- o Blekinge Institute of Technology
- o Chalmers University of Technology
- o Dalarna University
- o Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University College
- o GIH – the Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences
- o Halmstad University
- o Jönköping University
- o KMH – Royal College of Music in Stockholm
- o KTH Royal Institute of Technology
- o Karlstad University
- o Karolinska Institutet
- o Kristianstad University
- o Linköping University
- o Linnaeus University
- o Luleå University of Technology
- o Lund University
- o Malmö University
- o Mid Sweden University
- o Mälardalen University
- o Royal Istitute of Art
- o SLU – Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- o SMI – University College of Music Education in Stockholm
- o Sophiahemmet University College
- o Stockholm School of Economics
- o Stockholm School of Theology
- o Stockholm University
- o Stockholm University of Arts
- o Swedish Defence University
- o Södertörn University
- o The Swedish Red Cross University College
- o Umeå University
- o University West
- o University of Borås
- o University of Gothenburg
- o University of Skövde
- o Uppsala University
- o Örebro University
- o Other, specify

6. Enrolment year

7. Graduation year

8. Language of instruction

- Swedish
- English
- Other

9. Was Sweden your first priority destination?

- Yes
- No

10. If not, what was your first priority?

Please, specify

11. When choosing Sweden as destination for your studies, have you considered the option of

staying here and finding job after graduation?

- Yes
- No
- Didn't think of it

12. Reason for choosing Sweden as the destination for your studies (choose three most important)

Quality of education
Reputation of the institution
Study program
Cost of education
Opportunity to get employment in this country after graduation
Opportunity to continue studies in this country after graduation
Other perspectives after graduation
Life quality in this country
Family reunion
Other, please specify

13. Level of studies completed in Sweden

- Vocational
- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctoral

14. Field of studies

- Arts
- Business, administration and law
- Education
- Engineering, manufacturing and construction
- Health and welfare
- Humanities
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICTS)
- Medicine
- Natural sciences, mathematics, statistics
- Services (military science, sport science)
- Social sciences, journalism and information

15. Language proficiency

	None	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Native
Swedish	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
English	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

16. Full-time work experience prior to graduation

- 0-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-3 years
- 3 years and more

17. Current employment status

NB: Please consider salaried PhD position as a full-time employment and non-salaried as further studies

- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Fixed-term employment
- Looking for job
- Unemployed, not looking for job
- Intern
- Student
- Other, please specify

18. If employed, where?

- Sweden
- Home country
- Other, please specify

19. If employed, how much time it took to gain employment?

- 0-6 months
- 6-12 months

- o 1-3 years
- o 3 years and more

20. How satisfied are you with your current employment?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not satisfied at all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very satisfied

21. How relevant is your employment to the level of your studies in Sweden?

- o Employment requires lower level of qualification
- o Employment requires same level of qualification
- o Employment requires higher level of qualification
- o N/a or not sure

22. How relevant is your employment to the field of your studies in Sweden?

- o Not relevant
- o Partly relevant
- o Completely relevant
- o N/a or not sure

23. How satisfied are you with your salary?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not satisfied at all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very satisfied

24. How big is your salary compared to an average in your field?

- o Below average
- o Average
- o Above average
- o N/a or not sure

25. What, do you think, helped you to get employed (e.g. qualification, network, degree project,

internship etc.)?

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