

Tiedekunta-Fakultet-Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos-Institution-Department Department of Sociology	
Tekijä-Författare-Author Akhlaq, Ahmad			
Työn nimi-Arbetets titel-Title Getting a Job in Finland : The Social Networks of Immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent in the Helsinki Metropolitan Labour Market			
Oppiaine-Läroämne-Subject Sociology			
Työn laji-Arbetets art-Level Doctoral dissertation		Aika-Datum-Month and year 2005-11-09	Sivumäärä-Sidantal-Number of pages Sivumäärää ei ilmoitettu
<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This work is linked to studies on the role of social networks in gaining access to the labour market. The aim was to explore the various ways in which the immigrants of this study had entered the job market and the extent to which their personal networks had helped them to locate and obtain employment opportunities during their stay in Finland. The data for the study was collected in two ways. First, the participant-observation method was used in order to obtain first-hand experience of the employment situation of non-nationals in the Finnish labour market. The scope of their opportunities was explored through job information located via impersonal sources such as newspapers and the national employment agency. This objective was realised by answering 400 job advertisements and going through all the processes that a job seeker generally encounters in applying for a particular post. Secondly, 40 semi-structured interviews of an ethnographic and exploratory nature were conducted among immigrants originating from the Indian subcontinent residing in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The aim was to chart the entire occupational histories of the immigrants from the time of their arrival in Finland to the present.</p> <p>The findings of this study show that, despite the nationwide well-established system of public employment agencies in Finland, and the relatively easy access this formal channel offers to job seekers regarding information about new vacancies, social networks still constitute a substantial source of job information and employment opportunities for immigrants in the Finnish labour market. The significance of these networks is particularly strong for non-nationals who, because of having originated from outside the social system, may find access to employment opportunities rather restricted in the host society. The findings reveal that for the majority of the immigrants included in this study the transmission of job information had occurred through informal channels and reliance on such personal means had persisted throughout most of their occupational careers. In particular, their ethnic friends and kin had often acted as transmitters of job information. Moreover, the role of the immigrants' networks had also been quite significant in securing jobs themselves, as half of the informants' entire employment spells had been obtained with the direct assistance of their social ties. This practical assistance in the provision of job information and in the acquisition of employment had been crucial for the immigrants especially at the beginning of their careers as it had helped get their feet on the ground in the new sociocultural reality.</p> <p>The findings also point to the dual role that social networks can potentially play in the occupational-attainment process. On the one hand, they acted as a crucial resource-opportunity structure in providing employment opportunities for the immigrants, and on the other hand they operated as constraining factors by channelling them into low-prestige sectors of the labour market. However, notwithstanding the important role of personal networks in landing the immigrants in occupations of low human-capital requirements, the findings also suggest the need to consider the interplay of other factors such as human-capital attributes and structural constraints – including discrimination and internal labour-market regulations in various sectors – that may also introduce mobility restrictions and thereby affect the life chances of non-nationals in the host society.</p> <p>Explanation of the prevalence of informal job-search methods among the informants was sought in the fact that jobs are social phenomena arising in a labour market that is socioculturally constructed. By virtue of their sociocultural embeddedness, these phenomena tend to evade the notions according to which the acquisition of jobs is solely a function of human-capital attributes. Based on the empirical evidence, it was argued that such notions are inadequate in understanding the complex nature of the job-finding process. It was therefore contended that the idea of a labour market in which the actors sell and hire labour according to the objective, rational rules of supply and demand is rather open to doubt. Instead, it was suggested that the concept of the labour market could be more fruitfully studied as a socially and culturally constructed rather than an undifferentiated and competitive space in which the rules of supply and demand are shaped by a particular sociocultural reality. In this context, it was also argued that the hiring process driven by abstract or impersonal criteria is much less prevalent than claimed by certain conceptual paradigms geared to the understanding of the economic structure and differential outcomes in the labour market.</p>			
<p>Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords</p> <p>social networks</p> <p>immigrants</p> <p>labour markets</p> <p>employment opportunities</p> <p>Indian subcontinent</p> <p>Pakistan</p> <p>India</p>			

job-search methods  
työnhakijat - intialaiset  
siirtolaiset  
työmarkkinat - Suomi  
työllisyys  
työllistyminen

Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited

Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information