The civil servant’s point of view on immigrants and acculturation in Finland

A Qualitative Attitude Approach

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1 Introduction

People migrate to Finland for different reasons – some come due to family connections, others to study or to work, and some come as refugees or asylum seekers. The Act on Integration was passed in 2010 in order to promote the integration of immigrants and their participation in society.

The multifaceted acculturation process of immigrants forms a basis of wide-ranging social psychological research. When the Act on Integration (2010) is compared to the theories of acculturation, the acculturation orientation Finland supports through its legislation is integration.

Finland offers many services for immigrants and all immigrants are entitled to a personalised plan to support their integration in Finnish society. Those civil servants who work with immigrants play a crucial role in this process because they, together with individual immigrants, devise these plans.

This study seeks to learn what civil servants, working with immigrants, think about foreigners, immigrants and immigration in Finland. It will also scrutinise the attitudes of civil servants towards the process of acculturation, what they consider to be important for integration, and how their attitudes correlate to what is written in immigrant legislation and the way in which integration is defined in social psychology.

The first chapter will introduce the context of the study by outlining immigration and immigration legislation and policies in Finland. Social psychological theories on acculturation will appear in chapter 2. The acculturation models of Berry (1974, 1980, as cited in Berry, 1997), Bourhis et al. (1997), and Hutnik (1986) will be discussed, as will the way in which each model resembles or differs from The Act on Integration (2010). Integration will here be defined according to social psychological theories, but other definitions from different disciplines will also be briefly acknowledged. Research on integration and acculturation will be presented,
as will be the different national ideological approaches to immigration, which will then compared to the ideology of the Finnish state.

This study is primarily interested in the attitudes of civil servants. After introducing the existing mainstream research on attitudes, the theoretical discussion will concentrate on the social and rhetorical view on attitudes, with special attention given to the theories and research of Michael Billig (1996). This exploration of the literature will direct the reader towards the Qualitative Attitude Approach, the method used in this thesis. The definition of attitude in this thesis will be put forward as a logical end product of the theoretical backdrop presented. At the end of chapter 3, existing research about attitudes towards immigrants in Finland will be reviewed and the research questions formulated.

The Qualitative Attitude Approach and its theoretical principles will be described in chapter 4 and the research sample, officers working in the Social Centre of Refugees and Returnees in Tampere, will be introduced, as will be the statements used in the interviews, and the procedure they followed. The principles of analysis will also be set forth.

After the classifying analysis in chapter 5, in which the material will be organised, an interpretive analysis will be conducted in chapter 6 to answer the research questions. The results will then be discussed in chapter 7, in relation to earlier research, immigration legislation and social psychological theories, in order to ascertain whether the officers’ attitudes mirror the legislative and social psychological interpretations of integration. After discussing the findings, thoughts about possible future research will offered, the method itself evaluated, and the limitations of the study and ethical issues will be considered.
2 Context of the Study

2.1 Immigration in Finland

In 2011 approximately 29,500 people moved to Finland from abroad. The net immigration of foreign citizens was approximately 2,000 persons. (Tilastokeskus, 2013.) In December 2011, approximately 180,000 people, out of a population of 5.4 million, were foreign citizens, 9 percent more than in 2010. In 2011 the largest immigrant groups were Estonian, Russian, Swedish, Somali, Chinese and Iraqi. (Tilastokeskus, 2012.)

In 2010 most immigrants moved to Finland due to family ties (31%), study (25%) or work (17%) and approximately three percent were returnees, returning immigrants. 14 percent of immigrants had moved for other reasons (this includes refugees) and 10 percent were asylum seekers. (Maahanmuutovirasto, 2010.) In the last few years the quota for refugees has remained at 750 per year, but in 2010, for example, only 634 refugees came to Finland because municipalities were unable to accommodate more. Recently, the majority of refugees have been citizens of the Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Burma. In 2011 asylum was granted to 1271 asylum seekers. The number of asylum seekers decreased almost one quarter from 2010 and close to half from 2009. In 2011 the four main countries of origin for asylum seekers (who were granted asylum) were Russia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. (Maahanmuutovirasto, 2012.)

Most immigrants live in the southern cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, where 6.5 – 7.5 percent of people are foreigners. In Turku and Tampere (the next largest cities in Finland), the figures are 5 and 3.7 percent, respectively. The majority of refugees and asylum seekers are placed in Southern of Finland. (Maahanmuutovirasto, 2010.)

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1 People of foreign origin who have become Finnish citizens, or asylum seekers are not included.
2.2 Context-related definitions

In this thesis ‘immigrant’ is a person of foreign origin, who has been registered to stay in Finland due to other reasons than tourism (The Act on Integration, 2010). People come to live in Finland, for example, due to family, work or study, or as refugees or asylum seekers (Tilastokeskus, 2012).

*Kotoutuminen* is a term used in immigration legislation and public discussion in Finland (for example, in the Act on Integration, 2010). While usually translated into English as integration, the meaning of the Finnish is closer to ‘settling in’, and in this thesis, where material has been translated by the researcher, *kotoutuminen* is translated as settling in. Conversely, in the case of specific Finnish laws which have been given official English names, *kotoutuminen* appears translated as integration, as in The Act on Integration (*Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä*), which defines *kotoutuminen* and *kotouttaminen* in the following way:

*Kotoutuminen*/settling in: “The interactive development between the immigrant and Finnish society that aims to provide knowledge and skills needed in society and working life, and supports the possibility of maintaining the original language and culture.” (The Act on Integration, 2010, 3 §)

*Kotouttaminen*/to settle (the immigrant) in: “The actions and services of the officials and other sectors that promote and support the settling in of the immigrant.” (The Act on Integration, 2010, 3 §)

In this thesis the concept of integration refers to one particular acculturation strategy, where people are keen to maintain their own culture and cultural identity, but at the same time seek interaction with the larger society and adopt features of the new culture (for example Berry, 1997 and Bourhis et al., 1997). This distinction is made to differentiate clearly between two concepts—the one used in Finnish legislation and public discussion and the one used in this thesis.
Integration and acculturation will be more thoroughly defined and discussed in chapter 3.

2.3 Immigration legislation and policies in Finland

According to the Constitution of Finland (1999) everyone is equal before the law and it is illegal to discriminate against anyone based on gender, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, and state of health, disability or other personal characteristics (Constitution of Finland, 1999). To this list the Equality Act (2004) adds racial origin, citizenship, and sexual orientation and it further specifies that people cannot be discriminated against in either the private or public sectors, be it in terms of education, employment, social services, health care, national service, or housing etc. (Equality Act, 2004.) For immigrants this means that they share the same rights and responsibilities as Finnish citizens and are treated equally with the Finnish population. Exceptions are asylum seekers who are not entitled to full social benefits (they are provided with free accommodation and a decreased living allowance for food and clothes) until they have been granted asylum. However, they are entitled to work\(^2\), study, go to school, and have access to health care services and legal aid. (The Act on Integration, 2010.)

The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers (Laki maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisesta ja turvapaikanhakijoiden vastaanotosta) was passed in 1999 to support and promote settling in and participation of immigrants in Finnish society. It aimed to promote equality and positive interaction between different groups. (The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers, 1999.) The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers was replaced by the Act on Integration (2010), which came into force on 1.9.2011. The Act on Integration (2010) guarantees a settling in plan for immigrants who have a residence permit\(^3\) to live in Finland and have registered as

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\(^2\) Asylum seekers are entitled to work without permit three months after they have left the asylum application (The Act on Integration, 2010).

\(^3\) Immigrants who have a residence permit, a residence card, or have been registered in other appropriate way (The Act on Integration, 2010).
jobseekers, or regularly receive income support (*toimeentulotuki*). A plan may also be drawn up for minors and other immigrants if they request it and if the authorities agree on its importance. The settling in plan is a personalised 'plan of action' meant, in conjunction with various support services, to facilitate both the learning of either official language (Finnish or Swedish) and the acquisition of the skills and knowledge needed to cope in Finnish society and working life. Each plan acknowledges previous education and work experience and surveys the possibilities of continuing in the same profession in Finland. The intention, ultimately, is to enable the individual to participate in society as an equal member, and to that effect available assistance can include the following: the teaching of the immigrant's mother tongue; education of Finnish society and culture; the teaching of reading and writing; and supplementary education in cases where an individual has not finished elementary school. Other services may also be afforded according to need; by provision of the act, each plan is devised to cater best to an individual’s requirements. Most immigrants are entitled to a three-year plan (one year at a time), which in some circumstances can be prolonged for a further two years. Returnees are granted one year, and pensioners five. (The Act on Integration, 2010.)

The task of formulating specific plans falls to both the TE Office and the relevant municipality. The TE Office (Office for Employment and Economic Development) is nominally responsible for those who are looking for a job, while the municipality takes charge of those who are unable to participate in employment-related actions. Representatives from both however, draw up each plan, working in conjunction with the individual immigrant. The ELY Centre (the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) is responsible for organizing any employment-related settling in education for immigrants, but their participation is directed by the TE Office. It also provides information about additional forms of instruction, organised either by the private sector (non-governmental organizations) or universities, polytechnics etc, according to the wishes of the individual. The municipality is similarly responsible for arranging settling in education and for supplying information about other training

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4 Due to age, health-related reasons, family reasons etc.
possibilities for those who do not seek employment. The immigrant commits to follow the plan and it is revised once a year. If an individual fails to fulfil the agreed requirements of the plan (for example does not take part in language instruction), payment of the settling in support (kotoutumistuki) (labour market support, työmarkkinatuki, or income support, toimeentulotuki, can be restricted. (The Act on Integration, 2010.)

The Act on Integration (2010) also lists the responsibilities of municipalities towards immigrants and in support of immigration. According to the Act on Integration (2010), municipalities are to uphold the ideas of internationalism and multiculturalism and to promote equality and the positive interaction of different groups. The goals are to encourage good relationships and communication between ethnicities and cultures, to activate immigrant groups to participate in society, and to support the possibility of maintaining original languages and traditions. Municipalities should also take the needs of immigrants and the support of settling in into consideration in municipal planning. Municipalities should aim at cooperation between the municipality, TE Office, police, and the organizations and associations that support settling in by organizing training and other services. Municipalities and the state draw up separate plans of how best to promote the settling of immigrants. (The Act on Integration, 2010.)

3 Theoretical background of acculturation and attitudes

Social psychological theories of acculturation describe the process of change that immigrants go through when they move from one culture to another, or when minorities live within the majority culture (for example, Berry, 1997). This chapter begins by introducing the primary theoretical background for acculturation, before concentrating more closely on one of the acculturation orientations, namely, integration. The second part of this chapter introduces theories of attitudes, and more specifically, theoretical background for the Qualitative Attitude Approach (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007), the method used in this thesis. Studies about attitudes,
civil servants and immigration and immigrants will be considered. At the end of this chapter the research questions will be formulated.

3.1 Acculturation

Originally the concept acculturation was used to describe the change in cultures, and according to the classical definition by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, p. 149):

“Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups”.

Later Graves (1967), proposed the use of ‘psychological acculturation’ to describe the changes experienced by individuals whose cultural group collectively experiences acculturation (Graves, 1967). Berry (1990, p. 235) defined psychological acculturation as a “process by which individuals change, both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in general acculturative changes under way in their own culture”.

The definition of Redfield et al. (1936) implies the bidirectional nature of acculturation by noting that changes occur in both groups. The Social Science Research Council (1954) emphasized, that acculturation can be “reactive (triggering resistance to change in both groups)” and “creative (stimulating new cultural forms, not found in either of the cultures in contact)”. Berry (1997), however, noted that in reality acculturation usually induces more change in only one of the groups (Berry, 1997, p. 7). By this he meant that the non-dominant group, for example, immigrants, usually change more than the majority group members.
According to the earlier models of acculturation, for example, The Unidimensional Assimilation Model by Gordon (1964), cultural changes in the life of an immigrant form a unilinear process, a continuum, along which one's original culture lies at one end and the adoption of the values and behaviours of the new culture (or dominant society, in case of non-dominant minority groups) lies at the other. This perspective assumed that the original culture disappears when the new culture is adopted. Also, according to this view, biculturalism is only a transitory phase, a midpoint in the process of assimilating the new culture (Gordon, 1964). This perspective, however, is no longer supported. Berry (1974, 1980, as cited in Berry, 1997) was first to suggest, that immigrant and host culture identities were independent dimensions rather than two ends of one continuum and current thinking considers acculturation is to be a multilinear/multidimensional process, where the individual adopts some things from the new culture, while maintaining certain aspects of the original culture (Laroche et al., 1998). Research has supported the multilinear model by revealing a preference for the maintenance of at least some heritage culture compared to the total assimilation of the new culture (for example, Moghaddam, Taylor, & Lalonde, 1987). The multilinear model regards assimilation as one way to acculturate, and not as synonymous with acculturation.

Different people in different situations acculturate in various ways. Berry (1974, 1980, as cited in Berry, 1997) developed perhaps the most well known framework to study and understand the different orientations of acculturation. In order to define different acculturation strategies by non-dominant groups, he studied two issues that these groups are assumed to weigh, namely cultural maintenance and contact/participation in host society. By cultural maintenance Berry meant, “to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for”, and by contact/participation, “to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves”. (Berry, 1997, p. 9.) When considering the possible ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers of minority members to these two assumed questions, four different acculturation strategies emerge.


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<td><strong>Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society?</strong></td>
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<td>&quot;YES&quot;</td>
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Figure 1. Acculturation Strategies (Berry, 1997, p. 10)

When people are keen to maintain their own culture and to seek interaction with wider society, *integration* is defined. When they seek interaction with wider society, but are not keen to maintain their own culture, *assimilation* is defined. When people want to maintain their own culture but do not want to interact with wider society, *separation* is defined, and when they decide to reject both cultures, their own and that of society-at-large, *marginalisation* is defined. Reasons for marginalisation are, for example, enforced cultural loss and discrimination towards non-dominant groups. (Berry, 1997, pp. 9-10.) This model has received some criticism, from, for example, Liebkind (2001) who notes that the social dimension needs “a clear distinction between the two relatively independent aspects of social contact on the one hand and societal participation (e.g., in work life) on the other” (Liebkind, 2001, p. 398). The model was also criticised for comparing attitudes (Issue 1) with behavioural intentions (Issue 2), which some researchers have argued were not compatible, even though they both referred to types of attitudes or values towards issues (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 378). In order to solve this inconsistency, Bourhis and his colleagues (1997) replaced Issue 2 (Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society?) with ‘Is it considered to be of value to adopt the culture of the host community?’ The concept of *cultural identity* (see below) in Bourhis’s model (1997) means changes in culture generally, for example, in language, not just in identity (Bourhis et al., 1997, p.
378). Also marginalisation was replaced with *anomie* and *individualism*: some people reject the original and the new culture and that leads to cultural anomie, while some people want to be identified as individuals instead of members of any groups. These individualists do not feel marginalised as do those who face the rejection of both cultures. Individualism is more common among people from individualistic cultures, compared to those coming from collective cultures. (Bourhis et al., 1997, pp. 378-379.)

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<th>Is it considered to be of value to adopt the cultural identity of the host community?</th>
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<td>Integration</td>
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<td>Separation</td>
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<td>Anomie / Individualism</td>
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Figure 1. Revised bidimensional model of immigrant acculturation orientations (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 377)

Hutnik (1986), on the other hand, saw acculturation as a question of identification. She proposed a Bidimensional Identification Model of four strategies of self-categorisation, determined by the degree to which individuals define themselves as members of a minority or majority group: the *acculturative individual* identifies with both the majority and the minority group; the *assimilative individual* with the majority group; the *dissociative individual* with the ethnic minority group, and the *marginal individual* with neither group (Hutnik, 1986). Liebkind (2001) has provided a useful division by naming these different perspectives *contact conceptualisation* (cultural maintenance & contact with the other group, Berry 1980), *adoption conceptualisation* (cultural maintenance & cultural adoption,
Bourhis et al., 1997) and *identification conceptualisation* (Hutnik, 1986) (Liebkind, 2001).

According to Berry’s model (Berry, 1997), Finnish immigration legislation promotes integration in that it encourages the maintenance of an immigrant’s own identity and characteristics and the forging of relationships with wider society. When compared with Bourhis’s model (Bourhis et al., 1997), the legislation is also defined as integrative if, for example, learning the language is considered to be cultural adoption. Given that Finnish immigration legislation does not specifically reference changes in identity, Hutnik’s model (1986) is not directly compatible. Nevertheless, the model has been used in formulating statements for the interviews and in analysing the research material, to assess whether it indicates the preferences of an acculturative, assimilative or dissociative individual.

Integration, according to Arends-Toth and Vijver (2006), is an umbrella concept that covers a variety of meanings. It can firstly denote assimilation, and, secondly, refer to any combination of adaptation/cultural maintenance. Thirdly, integration can describe a situation where the immigrant has access to both cultures and alternates between them, or, finally, integration can signify merging cultures, which develop from the old ones. (Arends-Toth & Vijver, 2006). Other disciplines, for example sociology and political science, have a different definition for integration. They use integration to describe the general integration of immigrants into a society, the process that enforces social cohesion. Integration is often used to describe the end result of acculturation, not one acculturation orientation. In sociology and political science, the definition of integration also includes the notion of two-way change, where both the immigrant and the society are expected to change (see, for example, Modood, 2006).

In this paper, integration is defined according to Berry (1997) and Bourhis et al. (1997) as one of the four acculturation orientations, where the immigrant maintains the old culture, adopts the new culture, and creates relationships with the host society.
According to the research, integration is usually the most adaptive acculturation strategy, marginalisation the least, while assimilation and separation are intermediate. This pattern has been found in virtually every study, and is present for all types of acculturating groups. (Berry 1997, p. 24.) Integration has been shown to lead to greater psychological (satisfaction and overall emotional or psychological wellbeing) and socio-cultural adaptation (Ward, 1996). Integration also has a strong relationship with good physical health (for example, Schulpen, 1996, Abráido-Lanza, Chao & Gates, 2008) and good economic adaptation (Berry, 1996).

Some studies have also shown, however, that the advantages of integration are influenced by context. For example, according to Sam and Berry (2010) integration is usually most common and functional in so-called settler societies (i.e., a society that has a long history of settling people, such as Australia, Canada and the United States), while other strategies (for example, ethnic profile or separation) may lead to good psychological adaptation in so-called non-settler societies (ones with more restrictive immigration laws, e.g., Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom) (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 477). Surveying acculturation orientations among young Russian returnees to Finland, Israel and Germany, Jasinskaja-Lahti and her colleagues (2003) found that while Israeli hosts typically stated a preference for integration, repatriates there perceived similar levels of discrimination to those in Finland, where the existing population favoured assimilation. Israeli repatriates also reported more stress symptoms than their counterparts in Finland (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003). In short, while integration is the best acculturation orientation most of the time, it does not always lead to the best outcome for immigrants, nor do other strategies necessarily lead to bad outcomes.

Integration is, in general, the strategy most preferred by immigrants and local populations (for example Berry, 1997), however, there are some exceptions. As mentioned above, whereas in Israel and Germany the host population and repatriates alike most value integration as an acculturation strategy, according to Jasinskaja-Lahti and her colleagues (2003), Finns favour assimilation.
Furthermore, when second preferences were taken into consideration in the same study, all immigrants in each of the three countries preferred more separation and marginalisation and less assimilation than the host populations. (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003.) In another study, a sample of Vietnamese immigrants preferred the strategy of assimilation nearly as much as that of integration, regardless of whether they were living in settler societies or in non-settler societies (Vedder et al., 2006). According to Navas et al. (2005) the host population perceives various immigrant groups differently and prefers different options for each of them and thus the immigrants are rarely able to choose the orientation themselves (Navas et al., 2005, p. 32). In summary, while integration is usually the acculturation orientation most preferred by hosts and immigrants, preference depends on context. In the case of Finland, assimilation seems to have some support among the host population, and immigrants may also benefit from strategies other than integration.

Acculturation strategies adopted by individuals usually also vary across different sectors of life. Berry’s (1997) model of acculturation was the first to acknowledge this by differentiating the private from the public. Arends-Toth and Van der Vijver (2006) have likewise since made the distinction between public and private spheres, and their study among Dutch immigrants showed a preference for integration in the public domain, and cultural maintenance (separation) in the private domain (Arends-Toth & Van Der Vijver, 2006). The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM) by Navas et al. (2007) was developed to study acculturation in different spheres of life. When Navas and her colleagues (2007) tested their model, they found out that in labour and economic domains immigrants mostly used an assimilation strategy, and in the “hard core” of their culture (social life, family, religious beliefs and ways of thinking), the strategy adopted was separation. (Navas et a., 2007.) Finnish immigration legislation coheres with the findings of these researchers in the sense that it does not penetrate into the private domain or the hard core of an immigrant’s culture.

Hutnik (1986), on the other hand, argued that the link between ethnic identity and behaviour is weak and that ethnic identity is partially autonomous from an
individual's mode of social adaptation. For example, a person may identify him/herself as Indian but in all areas of life (media preference, language use, styles of heterosexual relationships, marriage, choice of clothes etc.) behave as British. (Hutnik, 1986, p. 164.) Snauwaert et al. (2003) compared the acculturation models of Berry (1997) and Bourhis et al. (1997) with the identification model of Hutnik (1986). The ethnic minority members they studied in Belgium were more likely to have good and regular relationships with the Belgian majority, than to identify with Belgians or to adopt parts of Belgian culture. Snauwaert and his colleagues (2003) argue that identification with one's own ethnic group is not incompatible with integration and that there should be a clear distinction between different conceptualizations of the integration orientation. (Snauwaert et al. 2003.) Finnish immigrant legislation is in line with the research of Navas et al. (2007) and Snauwaert et al. (2003) in the sense that it seeks to encourage both participation in Finnish society (by working and learning the language) and the maintenance of private values and the culture of origin, and does not see the original identity as contradicting or threatening the process of settling in.

Due to social and political factors, the immigrant/member of non-dominant group is never completely free to decide which acculturation strategy to choose. According to Liebkind (2001), acculturation always happens in social reality, in the context of intra- and intergroup relations, which can either support or challenge the reconstruction of ethnic and cultural identity. (Liebkind, 2001, p. 399). According to Bourhis and his colleagues (1997), the state's immigration ideologies also influence the acculturation orientations of immigrants and local people. (Bourhis et al. 1997). A pluralist ideology expects immigrants to adopt the public values of the host society and to hold privately the values of their culture of origin, the maintenance of which the state supports both financially and socially, and which it considers as valuable to society as a whole. A civic ideology assumes the adoption of public values, does not interfere with the private sphere of an immigrant’s life, but nor is there any expectation that the state will fund or in other ways support the maintenance of the culture of origin. An assimilationist ideology seeks to impose certain values and is upheld through attitudinal atmosphere or laws that limit, for example, linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. The ethnist
ideology shares these two features of assimilation ideology, but immigrants/non-dominant group members will never become fully accepted in a given society because the membership is defined in ethnic and/or religious terms and in that way the society is exclusionist towards foreign people. (Bourhis et al. 1997, pp. 373-374.) Pluralistic and civic state ideologies are more likely to yield positive and harmonious relational outcomes than the other ideologies (Bourhis et al., 1997). Bourhis et al. (1997) also suggest that the attitudes and the acculturation orientations of the hosts and the immigrants interact and produce different intercultural relationships in a given society. The Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) proposes a conceptual bridge between public policies, host majority attitudes and immigrant group reactions in intercultural society. According to this model, the acculturation orientations of the host community (integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion/individualism) interact with the orientations of the immigrant community (integration, assimilation, separation, anomie/individualism) and produce consensual, problematic or conflictual outcomes, depending on the combination. If both communities (hosts and immigrants) support integration, the relational outcome is consensual, as is also the case when both support assimilation. However, all other combinations produce problematic or even conflictual outcomes. (Bourhis et al., 1997.) In the case of Finland, the pluralistic state ideology has produced integrative immigrant legislation and policies. However, the question remains whether the acculturation orientations of the host population and immigrants are concordant with each other, or with the official orientation. This thesis is a modest attempt to find out how a small number of hosts, namely, civil servants working with immigrants, construct acculturation in their talk, whether their thoughts are concordant or not with the way settling in is defined in Finnish legislation/public ideology and with the definitions of integration.

3.2 Attitudes

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the mainstream means of understanding and studying attitudes – a perspective which considers attitudes as more or less permanent features that individuals possess. It then moves to
introduce the view that considers attitudes to be inherently social and dependent on context. The theoretical base behind the Qualitative Attitude Approach (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007), the method used in this paper, will be presented. Studies about attitudes, civil servants and immigrants in Finland will be reviewed.

3.2.1 Social psychology of attitudes

Different research perspectives on attitudes agree on at least one thing: an attitude is about evaluation, more specifically, an individual’s positive or negative evaluation of something or someone (Fishbein, 1997; Augoustinos, Walker & Donaghue, 2006). An attitude is also about placing an object (whether abstract, like a value, or concrete like for example, a person) within the reach of evaluation (McGuire, 1985).

Traditionally, attitudes have been thought to have cognitive, affective and behavioural components that differently reflect an individual’s perceptions, feelings and behaviours towards the attitude object, responses which may be inconsistent with one another. However, models that attempted to measure the three components of one individual’s attitude towards a specific stimulus have proved empirically unreliable, and are less used nowadays. Furthermore, the causality between attitudes and behaviour has equally proved to be weak and studying it problematic. (For example, Augoustinos & Walker, 2006, pp. 114-115.)

Early research on attitudes was greatly influenced by behaviourism – attitudes were thought to form through classical conditioning. Allport (1935) defined an attitude as “a global stimulus-response disposition for the purpose of explaining differences in behaviour in objectively similar situations” (Allport, 1935, ref. Augoustinos et al., 2006, p. 137). After the Second World War cognitive research started to emphasize the role of beliefs and information processing in attitude formation (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 19). In current mainstream psychology, attitudes are mostly approached with quantitative methods and defined as “a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event” (Ajzen, 1986, p. 3). Also, according to Augoustinos et al. (2006),
“attitudes have specific referents, and thus will be only relevant when a particular object, person or issue is categorised as being attitude-relevant” (Augoustinos et al., 2006, p. 113). Attitudes are considered as individual traits, and the efforts of attitudinal change are usually directed to the individual (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, pp. 19-20, 22). Although, attitudes can change, attitudes are considered to be a largely stable body of knowledge (Augoustinos et al., 2006, pp. 112-114). Vesala and Rantanen call theories supporting these views dispositional theories (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, pp. 19-20, 22).

Many researchers have criticised the dispositional view on attitudes by arguing that an attitude is inherently social, not individual, and not explainable by individual psychology alone (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 22). According to Thomas and Znanieck (1974, as cited in Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 23), for example, an attitude includes a social element that links the individual to the social world: attitudes describe how an individual functions in the social world and how the shared social world is reflected in the individual. They argue that an attitude is not just psychological, a trait that can be limited to the individual. Nor, however, is an attitude purely social because it also describes the relationship between the individual and a social phenomenon. (Thomas & Znanieck, 1974 (1918), p. 23, as cited in Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 23.) Augustinos and Walker (2006), on the other hand, state that an attitude is constructed in social interaction and communication, originating from social life, and thus can be interpreted by emphasizing its social nature (Augustinos & Walker, 2006, p. 137). According to Vesala and Rantanen (2007), attitudes are also social in the sense that they are shared with other people. They argue that the dispositional view on attitudes has concentrated on finding differences between people, instead of commonalities. They observe that common attitudes are relevant, for example, when people have organised themselves around contested issues (political parties etc) (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 25). Vesala and Rantanen (2007), as well as Potter (1996), however, also acknowledge that the development of the dispositional view on attitudes has been influenced by the market economy and democracy where individual choices have been at the centre of interest (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007; Potter, 1996). Augoustinos and Walker (2006, p. 140) argue that people also use
attitudes to understand and organize the world and to define social groups and identities. Psychological research began to acknowledge the social aspects of attitudes in the 1980s when the social constructivist perspective became more popular (Augoustinos et al., 2006, pp. 136-137). The Qualitative Attitude Approach (QAA) (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007) is founded on the principle of attitudes as inherently social. Next, this thesis turns to rhetoric psychology, another cornerstone behind QAA.

Rhetoric psychology differs from the dispositional view in its perception and its emphasis of attitudinal ambivalence. According to the dispositional view, attitudinal ambivalence is most likely linked to complicated matters instead of simple targets and the attitudinal outcome is considered to depend on which elements of the attitude are most accessible at a specific point in time (Augoustinos et al., 2006, p. 119). Discursive psychological theories (rhetoric psychology being one of them), on the other hand, consider everyday talk as inherently messy and are particularly interested in attitudinal ambivalence and in understanding “how everyday evaluations with all their contradictions and ambiguities are used” (Potter, 1998, p. 242). This view stresses that the evaluations people voice depend on the discursive context and on the purpose those evaluations are designed to serve (Potter, 1998, p. 246). Discursive psychology argues that social psychologists should look to natural discourse to understand how evaluations are constructed and put together in everyday life (Augoustinos et al., 2006, p. 140).

Rhetoric psychology emphasises the importance of language (for example, in the development and voicing of attitudes), and particularly the argumentative aspects of discourse. From a rhetoric perspective, justification and criticism are important in conversation and do not only imply conflict. (Billig, pp. 20-21.) The central idea in the rhetoric perspective is borrowed from Protagoras (481-420 AD), stating that every argument (logos⁵) can be matched with a counter-argument (anti-logos). This can be considered as an inner debate in an individual’s mind, or an

⁵ In Greek: word
individual’s argument opposing another view in a social discussion. (ibid, pp. 75-76.) According to Billig (1996), a line of argument must counter other positions, in order to be meaningful, and so, the opposing position is part of the argument. He also suggests, that without knowing the counter-positions, the argumentative meaning is lost (ibid, p. 121). The function of argumentation is to convince, and it is done with rhetoric tools of justification and criticism (ibid, p. 2). Argumentation, however, can never produce an absolute truth (Perelman, 1996, p. 12) and thus, it should be considered as helping the individual to develop a chain of reasoning for the issue in hand (Billig, 1996, p. 74). Socially shared common places (loci communes⁶) can be used in justification and criticism, for example, people can appeal to common sense, in order to convince the other person (ibid, pp. 229-230).

According to mainstream psychology, thinking (as well as, for example, attitude formation) is based on categorisation (simply put, people organise things/events/persons etc. into different categories). The rhetoric perspective, however, sees categorisation paired with particularisation, where things/events etc. are, for example, extracted from a particular category, or are not been categorised at all. The processes of categorization and particularisation are both rhetoric strategies used in argumentation – whether the line of argument develops within an individual mind or in defending something in social dialogue. They should not be considered as distinct capabilities, but as dependent, oscillating with each other. (Billig, 1996, pp. 152-153; 160-161, 164.) As Billig (1996) puts it, “rhetorical situations alter, so the direction of the expressed attitudes can alter. Logoi can become anti-logoi, criticism can be transformed into justifications, as speakers bend their attitudes towards the changing oratorical context of contradiction” (ibid, p. 279). Attitudes are not isolated statements defining someone’s implacable stance towards something, but affected and toned by the rhetorical context of the argumentation. (ibid, pp. 255-256). In other words, the rhetorical perspective sees attitudes as inherently contradictory and fluctuating, depending on the context.

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⁶ Common places in Creek
Rhetoric psychology and the Qualitative Attitude Approach share an interest in argumentation and the importance of context in analysing the research material. There are, however, some differences in collecting the research material and in the analysis and interpretation of that material. These are further explained in chapter 4. The QAA also relies on a research tradition which emphasises social interaction, context and the multifacetedness of communication. According to Goffman (1986, as cited in, Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 30) and Bateson (1986, as cited in, Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 30), the most influential theorists of this perspective, attitudes intertwine with actors, interaction and social reality in different ways and, depending on the research interest/question at hand, different interpretations and emphases can be applied. For example, the attitudes can be looked from the point of view of their function, or from the point of view of the resources available to an individual to express his/her attitudes. (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, pp. 29-30.)

To summarise, in studying attitudes, the QAA combines the social view of attitudes with the rhetoric perspective, which regards attitudes as both inherently contradictory and constructed in the social world through language. The QAA studies attitudes by considering their context, and, as a qualitative approach, it prefers using semi-structured interviews, instead of response alternatives on scales developed to measure attitudes. It also does not assume that the objects of attitudes are similar for everyone, but instead asks what those objects are. For example, when people voice their opinions about immigrants, it is often assumed they refer to all immigrants, neglecting that people often mean a specific group of immigrants, refugees, for example, and not expatriates working for multinational companies.

3.2.2 Definition of attitude used in this thesis

There has been a debate whether discursive research should use the word *attitude* at all – the definition of an attitude as an evaluation recognised in communication is very different from the dispositional view. Vesala (2007) argues that the concept of attitude applies even in the context of social interaction, and suggests that discursive research might readily employ the terms “generating/producing
attitudes, ending up with attitudes and taking a stand/adopting attitudes” (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 27).

This thesis uses the word attitude and defines the concept according to Vesala and Rantanen (2007): an attitude is a communicative phenomenon essentially related to relationships and interactions between people. Attitudes are not internal to the individual but a phenomenon realised through interaction with his/her socially or culturally shared world, the social reality. As a social phenomenon, an attitude, however, necessarily includes the evaluator (group or individual), and is therefore also particular to the individual, a means by which he or she connects or relates to the social world. It is, after all, the individual, who generates, expresses and reacts to, and makes the attitude alive. Acknowledging the social nature of an attitude does not mean that individuality is not accepted or taken into consideration. (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, pp. 28-29.)

To summarise, it is assumed that contextual factors (environment, roles, status, perceptions etc.) influence the attitudes expressed by individuals. And while the subject (namely, the holder) of an attitude is assumed to be an individual, and not a group, expressions of attitudes are considered to be the result of interaction (between people) or social relationships. One further assumption is that even though attitudes can be diverse at the level of the individual, it is possible to identify an order of attitudes typical for a given social reality. In this paper attitudes are studied and interpretations of attitudes are drawn from the analysis of argumentative speech. (Pesonen & Vesala, 2007, pp. 29-32.)

Before moving to the Method chapter, research about attitudes towards immigrants in Finland will be introduced, and the research questions formulated.

3.2.3 Attitudes towards immigrants in Finland

Between 1987 and 2003, Jaakkola (2005) studied the attitudes of the Finnish population towards immigrants/immigration by interviewing more than one thousand ethnic Finns nationwide. Her research indicates that attitudes fluctuate
according to the economic situation: responses were most negative during the recession years in the beginning of the 1990s and moved in a more positive direction towards the year 2003. Jaakkola’s (2005) study also revealed an ethnic hierarchy: skilled, highly educated immigrants were more welcomed than less educated asylum seekers or people who had fled their home countries due to war (as compared to political refugees). Also, immigrants from neighbouring or developed countries, considered to be culturally likeminded and of similar appearance, were more positively evaluated than people who came from far away, from less developed countries, who looked different or who were culturally disparate. (Jaakkola, 2005.) According to Jaakkola’s (2008) more recent study, attitudes towards immigrants continued to improve until 2007 (Jaakkola, 2008). EVA (Elinkeinoelämän valtuuskunta, 2012) has likewise studied attitudes towards immigrants and according to their survey attitudes started to become more critical again in 2008, coinciding with the beginning of a financial and economic crisis in Europe. However, their more recent study done via Internet panel (N=1271), showed that the increase in critical attitudes has now stopped, and, in some parts, attitudes have returned to the same level as in 2008, (Elinkeinoelämän Valtuuskunta, 2012.)

Nevertheless, racist attitudes and behaviour, even discrimination, have been, and are, present in Finnish society. According to the Discrimination in the European Union 2008 survey by Eurobarometer, 65% of the Finns felt that ethnicity is still a reason for discrimination in Finland (European Commission, 2008, p. 35). Aaltonen, Joronen and Villa (2009) studied data from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration between 2008 and 2009 and found that ethnic/national origin or nationality had been the source of discrimination during employment in 32 % of the discrimination cases filed. Immigrants face slightly more discrimination in their working places, compared to the local population (Vartia et al., 2007). Qualitative research has revealed that dark skinned (adopted or immigrant) children experience daily comments about their skin colour (Honkasalo, 2003; Rastas, 2007) and Estonian and Russian women are easily labelled as prostitutes (Kyntäjä, 2005). A study by Larja et al. (2012) found out that men and women (N=1200) with Russian names needed to send twice as many applications in order
to get an invitation to a job interview, compared to men and women with Finnish names. Also, when ethnic and gender discrimination were compared, three times the discrimination was ethnicity-based as opposed to gender-based. (Larja et al., 2013.) Recently, some members of a number political parties have expressed negative attitudes and racist comments in public and political discussions about immigrants and immigration in Finland (see, for example, Korkein oikeus, 2012), and the language of the critical debate about immigration/multiculturalism has moved beyond the rules of convention (Keskinen, Rastas & Tuori, 2009).

Pitkänen (2007; Pitkänen & Kouki, 1999) has extensively studied civil servants in terms of their experiences of intercultural contact and the ethnic/cultural diversity they face in their work. In 1999 Pitkänen and Kouki conducted a national survey and found that the attitudes of civil servants varied according to profession: teachers, social workers and employment office workers had a more positive attitude than police and border guards (Pitkänen & Kouki, 1999). Tanner (2007) has edited a book containing a few, small quantitative and qualitative studies about the police and immigrants, which likewise indicate reciprocally negative attitudes, suspicion, mistrust and misunderstandings between the two groups (Tanner, 2007). In Pitkänen's and Kouki's (1999) study, in addition to profession, previous experiences and the nature of cultural contact (work or free time) influenced attitudes. Some civil servant groups thought immigration was good for Finnish society and culture, but others, namely, the police and border guards, perceived it as a threat to social order and safety. The same study also found an ethnic hierarchy – immigrants from Western Europe were preferred to Middle Easterners, North Africans and Russians. The question about integration (defined as adapting to Finnish society while maintaining one's own culture/language) revealed a contradiction between pluralistic ideals and practices that emphasize nationalistic values (Pitkänen & Kouki, 1999.) For a later survey (2005-2006) Pitkänen (2007) also included health care professionals and people working for the courts. The attitudes in general were more positive than in 1999, especially towards the highly educated, students, tourists, people from Western countries who came to work in Finland and those who came due to family reasons. According to Pitkänen (2007), one thing had remained the same between 1999
and 2006: the polarised perception of immigration. Civil servants largely perceived immigration to be a positive phenomenon, yet at the same time feared what it brought with it: the challenges and difficulties of multiculturalism. (Pitkänen, 2007, p. 317.)

Civil servants listed the following reasons for their negative perceptions of working with immigrants: lack of staff, finance, time and instructions; contradictions between instructions and actual practices; difficulties with language; lack of interpreters; cultural differences; and lack of their own intercultural education (Pitkänen, 2007). They saw immigrants as challenging and difficult customers, and although civil servants wanted to offer good service, immigrants were expected to adapt to existing procedures and ways of operation. In general, individualised services or procedures intended to help immigrants were seen as positive, but not suitable for the civil servants’ own work (Pitkänen, 2006, p. 115). In this survey, more than half of all civil servants saw the multicultural strategy as the best way to adapt, instead of assimilative strategies (Pitkänen, 2006, p. 115).

Apart from Pitkänen’s (2006; 2007; Pitkänen & Kouki, 1999) extensive research, there are few studies which deal specifically with the attitudes of civil servants towards immigrants. The literature concerning immigrants and civil servants in Finland is nonetheless wide, and often considers the intercultural anxiety and stress civil servants and immigrants face as a result of intercultural contact, attempting to find ways to improve intercultural communication and produce the best practices for those who work with immigrants. Brevis (2008), for example, did a survey and conducted some interviews about intercultural contact between immigrants and the civil servants working in the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA) and the TE Office. She looked particularly at the stress experienced by those same civil servants, in order to propose ways to improve both the contact between hosts and immigrants and the cultural adaptation of one to the other (Brevis, 2008.). Valtonen (2002) has, on the basis of her own research, suggested a participation-based framework for anti-oppressive practice to improve social work with immigrants. Hammar-Suutari (2009) has similarly examined the skills
of civil servants, their ability to cooperate with immigrants, their adaptation to a diversifying clientele and how the growing number of immigrants influences the work of civil servants.

3.3 Research questions

To sum up, Finnish immigration legislation and policies support integration as an official acculturation orientation, when integration is defined according to models by Berry (1997) and Bourhis et al. (1997). According to Bourhis et al. (1997), the ideology of the state and the attitudes of the host and immigrant population interact, and, in Finland's case, a pluralistic state ideology should promote positive attitudes among the hosts towards immigrants. In general, the attitudes of the Finnish population towards immigrants and immigration have improved from the beginning of the 1990s, fluctuating according to current economic circumstances. Yet research and the ongoing economic downturn suggest that racism and even discrimination are present in Finnish society. Policies intended to support integration have been implemented through governmental offices, and thus, the civil servants working in those offices have had an influential role. Studies have shown that the attitudes of civil servants towards immigration/immigrants did improve from 1999 to 2006, but given former trends, it can be assumed that the current economic downturn may influence the present attitudes of civil servants. Those attitudes have also been found to vary according to both the profession of the civil servant and the ethnicity of the immigrant. (Pitkänen, 2007.)

The first research question is: When civil servants, working with immigrants, speak about foreigners, immigration and immigrants, what specific objects do they evaluate and what rationale do they use in making their evaluations?

According to some studies (for example Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003), the acculturation strategy of assimilation has support among the Finnish population, yet very little research has considered what civil servants themselves think about
the acculturation process, nor what kind of acculturation orientation their thoughts reflect.

The second research question is: What attitudes do the same civil servants demonstrate towards the importance of different dimensions of the acculturation process, the two-way change of society, and acquiring employment, societal skills and knowledge?

4 Method

This chapter first briefly sums up the principles of the Qualitative Attitude Approach and gives reasons as to why this particular method was chosen. It then moves to introduce the sample of the study, clarifying how the interviews were done and presenting the statements used in the interviews. The chapter ends by explaining the principles of analysis.

4.1 Qualitative Attitude Approach

The Qualitative Attitude Approach was developed by Vesala and Rantanen (2007) during multiple research projects conducted between 1990 and 2000 (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 7). For the purpose of greater understanding, Vesala and Rantanen have argued that an attitude needs to be seen as a combination of the presenter of the attitude, the attitude itself, the object of the attitude, and the communicative context. (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 20). According to the authors, attitudes interweave actors, interaction, contexts or general social reality in multiple ways, which is why it is reasonable to consider the collected research material from a perspective which incorporates social and cultural context. Different interpretative emphases and concepts can also then be applied. (ibid, p. 30.) The emphasis of the QAA is on language and lines of argumentation, interaction and communication, and on the social nature of attitudes. (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 16.)
The basis of the QAA comprises partly structured interviews that produce commentary, and annotation that is induced from the analysis of that commentary (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 11). The collection of material and the analysis of that material bind together the theoretical elements. In analysing the collected material, the following things are considered: what is being evaluated; who is evaluating; and how the evaluation is done (ibid, p. 29). The QAA is further described in chapter 4.4 Principles for analysis.

Why is the QAA a beneficial method for studying the attitudes of civil servants towards both immigrants and the correct way to acculturate? The QAA reveals the multitude of arguments which exist among the sample and it gives an opportunity for the civil servants to justify and clarify their opinions and to give conditions to them, which in turns leads to a more nuanced understanding of the issue at hand. This method permits the recognition of multiple objects for evaluation, as well as multiple roles in which those evaluations can be voiced. This method will not allow for any generalization of results. However, it maps the existing situation of the sample interviewed for this thesis and may give ideas for future research.

4.2 Sample

The Social Centre of the Refugees and Returnees of Tampere (SCRR) (Tampereen Ulkomaalaistoimisto) was chosen as the office where civil servants working with immigrants were interviewed. The SCRR was established in 1989 and it operates under the City of Tampere. Tampere is the second largest city in Finland, with approximately 200 000 inhabitants and is located in central Finland in Pirkanmaa (Tampereen Kaupunki, 2012a). In 2010, Pirkanmaa received 743 refugees and asylum seekers, compared to the capital area Uusimaa, which received 3 023 from a national total of 10 479 (Maahanmuuttovirasto, 2010). In 2011 8 523 foreign citizens were living in Tampere, which was 4 percent of the total population of this city (compared to the 8 percent living in Helsinki, Finland’s capital). The biggest groups of foreign citizens were from Russia, Estonia, Iraq, India and Afghanistan.
The clients of the SCRR are refugees, asylum seekers and returnees (mainly Ingrian Finns from Russia). The office receives approximately 200 new clients every year, out of a total, in any one year, of approximately 550, 50 of which are returnees. Refugees use the services of the SCRR for three years, asylum seekers four years, returnees for one year and elderly immigrants (65 years and more) for five years. The majority of clients come from Iraq, Somalia, or other parts of Africa. (Äikäs, 2012.) The SCRR is responsible, for, among other things, the reception of immigrants, organizing their accommodation, familiarizing them with different offices and the social welfare/health system, introducing them to Finnish society and offering help in everyday life and financial issues, providing access to language and other courses, education and job-seeking, and drawing up the settling in plan (kotouttamissuunnitelma) in conjunction with the TE Office. The office employs approximately 15 people, primarily social workers. Four members of the staff have an immigrant background.

4.3 Number of interviews, statements used and procedure

4.3.1. Interviews

To organize the interviews, the Social Centre of the Refugees and Returnees in Tampere was contacted by email. Once the head of the centre agreed, permission to conduct interviews was sought directly from the city of Tampere. Those civil servants who agreed to participate in this study were given an introductory letter (Appendix A), which included the following: the researcher's contact information and a short biography; a brief explanation of the Masters programme in 'Ethnic relations, cultural diversity and integration' at the University of Helsinki, for which this Master thesis has been prepared; a description of the study and the method of interview; an estimate of the time the interview would take; and an evaluation of the date of submission. The letter, signed by the researcher, also assured participants that all material in the study would be treated confidentiality and in strict accordance with proper research ethics.
The interviews were conducted in the offices of the civil servants and beforehand the interviewees signed a letter (Appendix B) stating that their participation was voluntary, that they knew they could end the interview at any time, and that they gave the researcher permission to use the material collected in the interview. To begin, the researcher outlined the interview briefly, asked permission to use a recording device, and sought to have a short, general conversation to relax the atmosphere. The researcher also asked the interviewee to describe her/his job in order to gain a better understanding of the office in general. The job descriptions, however, were not recorded and do not form part of this study.

Six interviews were conducted. Five of the interviewees were female, one was male, and all were ethnic Finns. Every interviewee was given a random letter (A-F) for identification. The first interview was conducted on 28 February 2012. The first interviewee was presented with nine statements and the interview lasted approximately one-and-a-half hours. After the first interview, the number of statements was decreased to seven to curb the length of future interviews, and to avoid, as had happened in the first, statements overlapping. The two statements that were subsequently omitted have not been analysed, in order to protect the anonymity of the first officer. Three of the statements were also modified after the first interview, in order to make them easier to comprehend. Only the relevant comments related to those three statements (from the first interview) are included in the analysis. The seven modified statements were presented to five interviewees, and those interviews lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. These five interviews were conducted over the course of three days, from 23-25 May 2012. The length of time between the first and the subsequent interviews was due to time-related issues at the office and logistical difficulties owing to the researcher’s residence abroad. The interviews were transcribed literally, producing 4 to 19 pages per interview and 54 pages altogether. One interviewee proved taciturn, professed fatigue and appeared reluctant to engage. The researcher attempted small talk in order to encourage the participant to relax and be more forthcoming. The remarks which followed, relating to the weather, coffee, how many years the interviewee had worked in the office and what else the
interviewee enjoyed doing, were not transcribed and this interview produced only four pages of useable material.

Each statement was printed on a separate piece of paper in Finnish, the language used in each of the interviews. The interviewer read the statement aloud before placing it in front of the interviewee, who was then encouraged to talk about the statement, either to agree or disagree, and to give comments, justifications, or reasons for her/his opinions etc. The interviewer also asked the interviewee to give examples, to elaborate more, and so on. To relax the discussion, the researcher occasionally reverted to small talk.

The analysis of the material was done in Finnish and only the parts used in this thesis have been translated into English. Some Finnish expressions have been replaced by phrases that are more commonly used in English language, for example ‘a ja o’ was translated to ‘alfa and omega’. In translating the comments, however, all attempts were made to preserve the original meaning as much as possible, including grammatical mistakes. In order to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, responses which may have revealed too much about an individual officer have been omitted or modified.

4.3.2. Statements

The first two statements were about immigrants and immigration in general, and were intended to elicit discussion, which might in turn provide answers to the first research question (When civil servants, working with immigrants, speak about foreigners, immigration and immigrants, what specific objects do they evaluate and what rationale do they use in making their evaluations?).

The first statement, Foreigners are good for Finnish society, sought to prompt general points of view about foreign people, including immigrants, and their impact on Finnish society. The statement offered the interviewee the possibility to
voice what he/she thought were the positive or negative consequences brought by
the presence of foreigners.

The second statement, *Immigration should be increased*, was also intended to
prompt the discussion of immigration in general. The statement suggested an
*increase* in immigration particularly to provoke stronger supporting and opposing
arguments and give further food for discussion. It also presented a good
opportunity to specify different objects for evaluation, namely whether an increase
in immigration meant accepting more refugees and asylum seekers, or those who
might come due for the purposes of employment or for family reasons.

The following five statements focussed rather on acculturation and were meant to
encourage discussion attuned with the line of enquiry of the second research
question (*What attitudes do the same civil servants demonstrate towards the
importance of different dimensions of the acculturation process, the two-way change
of society, and acquiring employment, societal skills and knowledge?*) These
statements were inspired by Finnish acculturation legislation and policies, social
psychological theories on acculturation and wider research about attitudes,
immigrants and civil servants.

The third statement was *Finnish society should change to accommodate
multiculturalism better*. By the definitions used in sociology and political science,
true integration is two-way in the sense that both the immigrant and the host
society are expected to change, the society being the executive actor (for example,
For example, to promote settling in at the local level, it is written in the Act on
Integration (2010): “the needs of the immigrant population and promoting settling
in are to be considered in municipal and public authority general planning,
activities and monitoring” (The Act on Integration, 2010, 29 §); and “the
municipality needs to ensure that the municipal services are suitable also for
immigrants”. (The Act on Integration, 2010, 30 §) Pitkänen (2006), however,
discovered during her study that immigrants were expected to adapt to existing
procedures and ways of operation (Pitkänen, 2006, p. 115). The third statement
then sought to encourage some discussion as to whether the civil servant believed in society's responsibility to change. In the first interview, the statement was presented as *Finnish society should better take in to consideration the needs of immigrants*. It was changed in order to make it simpler.

The fourth statement was *Societal skills and knowledge are most important – an immigrant does not necessarily need to form relationships with Finnish people*. This statement combined the settling in actions and legislation of Finnish society with Berry's (1997) model of acculturation. Acculturation psychology sees the adoption of societal skills and knowledge as socio-cultural adaptation, most likely achieved when integration is the acculturation strategy (Ward, 1996). Finnish policies, on the other hand, consider the adoption of societal skills and knowledge as leading to good settling in. Meanwhile, the Act on Integration (2010) also aims “to encourage good relationships and communication between ethnicities and cultures” (The Act on Integration, 2010, 29 §) and according to Berry’s (1997) model, relationships with society (in addition to cultural adoption) lead to integration, considered to be the best acculturation strategy. This statement sought to elicit, through discuss, what factors the officers considered most important for settling in.

The fifth statement was *In addition to employment, it is good if immigrants adopt ‘Finnishness’ in all areas of life*. In the interviews, to elaborate upon this statement, the researcher mentioned social relationships, family, ways of thinking, values etc, as examples of areas of life. It was inspired by the Finnish actions for settling in (employment) with different models of acculturation: according to Bourhis et al. (1997), integration results partly from adopting the culture/cultural identity of the host community. For Hutnik (1986), the acculturative individual identifies with both majority and minority groups, and, in his model, identity or identification change is considered as a condition for integration. Nevertheless Hutnik (1986) also states that ethnic identity is partly autonomous from the mode of acculturation, and Navas et al. (2007) point out that acculturation strategies vary along different life domains, while Snauwaert et al. (2003) acknowledge that identification with one’s own ethnic group is not incompatible with integration (see pp. 10-11). Some liberty was taken in choosing the word Finnishness instead
of Finnish identity, in order to make the statement simpler and easier to digest, and to enable a broader discussion of culture, different life domains and concrete practices, and not only identity. The purpose was to prompt comments about the recognisable features of Finnishness, and whether the immigrants should adopt these features or not. In the first interview the statement read as follows: *It would be good if immigrants participated in society in all areas of life (social relationships, values, etc.), not only through work.* It was changed to make it shorter and simpler and to emphasise the need for changes in identity and culture.

The sixth statement was *The three most important things for adaptation are the adoption of the new culture, maintaining the old culture and participating in society.* This statement aimed to summarize the central tenets of Finnish settling-in ideology, and also loosely to bind together the models of Berry (1997) and Bourhis et al. (1997). The statement was intended to encourage discussion about the necessity of each of the three dimensions, and to give the respondents the possibility of introducing something else they considered crucial for the adaptation of immigrants.

The seventh statement was not a statement at all, but rather the concept of *Settling in (kotoutuminen).* The interviewees were asked to describe what settling in meant to them, and how they themselves would define it. The absence of a direct statement was intended to open the discussion completely to the civil servant’s own thoughts of what settling in means, and what it demands, be it of the immigrant or society. For the first interview the statement read: *I think that integration is for all immigrants the best strategy to adapt.* It was changed because it was too long and in the first interview, the interviewee mainly discussed the meaning of settling in.

The first interview also included these two statements: *It would be good if the majority of civil servants working with immigrants were immigrants themselves* and *An immigrant adapts less if he does not adopt Finnish culture as part of his identity.* The statements were later excluded, because they overlapped with the others and because the length of the interview needed to be reduced. As previously stated,
they will not be analysed in order to protect the confidentiality of the first interviewee.

4.4 Principles for analysis

The analysis of the material has been performed on two levels. First, the comments have been categorised into perception categories according to whether they supported, opposed, or in some way qualified the statement. The qualifying category includes remarks that neither opposed nor supported the statement, but rather indicated reservations. For every statement, supporting comments are analysed first, then the reservations, and lastly the opposing remarks. Mason (2002, p. 148) divides the reading of data in qualitative research into literal and interpretive styles. In this first phase of analysis, all comments are read literally. The general principle for this level of analysis is borrowed from Klaus Mäkelä (1990): differences and similarities are sought and recognised, more specifically: “Differences of what and differences where?” (Mäkelä, 1990, p. 4.)

After categorising the material into supporting, opposing and qualifying perception categories, any individual rationalisations or justifications given are considered and further divided into two categories, now only to supporting and opposing reasoning. These categories are called reasoning categories. Different reasoning categories can support one perception category, and conversely one reasoning category can be used to support different perception categories. Attitudes are then sought from combinations from the perception categories and the reasoning categories. (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 12.) At this second level of analysis, the remarks and their justifications are read interpretively. According to Mason (2002) this means reading through or beyond the data in some way, to construct a version of what the researcher thinks the data represents (Mason, 2002, p. 149).

People may hold similar attitudes, but use different arguments to justify them, or conversely, the same argument can be used to justify different attitudes. It is then,
as Vesala and Rantanen (2007) suggest, precisely the variations in respondents’ comments and justifications, which impart to the researcher different information and disparate points of view of the same reality. (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, pp. 13-14.)

According to the idea of logos/anti-logos, every argument has a counter argument, and an attitude cannot exist without its opposite. While the limited research material of this study does not always allow for the counterpoint of every view, according to Vesala and Rantanen (2007), such material can still point out the areas of contradiction within the material. (ibid, 2007, p. 44.)

In the QAA, it is fundamental to consider who evaluates what and how. In other words, the method prioritises the following interrogatives: what kinds of objects are evaluated; who is the evaluator and how has the evaluation been done; what kinds of expressions have been used. (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, pp. 49-50.) Defining the object of the attitude can be a criterion for classification, but it can also only be revealed by combining commentary with justification. Defining the object is therefore a crucial part in the process of analysis. (Vesala & Rantanen, p. 41.) It is important, for example, to discover whether, when the interviewee refers to immigrants, he/she means humanitarian immigrants, returnees or exchange students. An attitude also includes the one who makes the evaluation, the subject. Dispositional research focuses upon the evaluator as an individual making personal assessments. The QAA, however, emphasises that the individual does not exist in isolation: the subject can be a member of some social category, be it civil servant, Finnish citizen, taxpayer, mother, father etc. (Vesala and Rantanen, 2007, p. 42.) It is equally important to consider the way in which comments are presented. Billig’s (1996) idea of particularisation suggests searching for comments that highlight one specific part from a general whole, for example pointing out/excluding exchange students from the category of immigrants. Common places of justification for different evaluations might also be sought: whether the interviewee rationalises his/her comments with statistics, common sense, the media, etc. (Billig, 1996, pp. 152-153). Above all, any commentary must be understood as inextricably linked to social and cultural context, and the product

The analysis of the comments prompted by the concept ‘Settling in’ does not follow the principles of the QAA because Settling in is not a statement and thus cannot be analysed as such. The ideas that arose in discussions of this concept will first be categorised according to factors which are cited in immigration legislation and those that are not. In the second instance, the same comments will be used as complementary information in the interpretative analysis and the discussion of the civil servants’ understanding of the acculturation process.

This thesis will now move on to the classifying analysis, where the material from the interviews will be organized into the three different perception categories of supporting, opposing and qualifying remarks.

5 Classifying analysis

This chapter presents the classifying, literal analysis of the commentary prompted by the seven statements read to the interviewees. This first level of analysis organises the material for the later interpretative analysis (chapter 6), during which the research questions will be answered. The material is analysed one statement at a time and the subtitles used throughout the chapter have been taken directly from the statements presented to the interviewees (the third, fifth and seventh statements differed between the first and subsequent interviews, and the original versions, used only once, have been written in the end of the first paragraphs). After each statement, a summary of the different perception categories (supporting, qualified, opposing) first appears, followed by a more detailed analysis of each, and the reasoning attached to them. Depending on the statement (whether it is positive or negative), supporting remarks are presented first, followed by reservations, and lastly, opposing remarks, or vice versa. Not all statements provoked comments for every perception category. Quotations from the interviews are given. The different reasoning for perception categories has
been divided into supporting and opposing *reasoning categories*, which have been summarised as a table at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Foreigners are good for Finnish society

Every person interviewed asserted that foreigners are good for the Finnish society and gave plenty of reasons why they thought so. Foreigners were seen to ‘spice up’ and to open up remote and secluded Finland. They were seen as benefiting society by bringing in new professional skills and cultural influences. Yet reservations also emerged: all except one respondent voiced some concerns or pointed out problems, and initially positive remarks were more and more qualified.

The evaluations of foreigners in Finland were largely supportive. Justification for the supporting perception category can be divided into four reasoning categories: 1) *They bring positive cultural influence*; 2) *They bring new professional skills and knowhow*; 3) *They help in replacing the baby-boom generation*; 4) *They help to induce positive attitude change towards foreigners among the local population*.

Firstly, according to some officers, Finland is a small and remote country where foreigners bring welcomed cultural influence. The sullen and introverted nature of Finnish people were stressed, and foreigners were thought to bring colour and variety. In other words, Finland and Finnish people were seen as isolated and benefitting from the presence of foreign people:

F: “*Immigrants stir up the society, our society is a bit of an isolated hinterland, a ‘bird’s nest’ (lintukoto, a paradise-like place)... they air this atmosphere, hopefully in a good way, new positive influence. Interaction increases, of course also when travelling abroad, but hopefully here too.*”

Civil servants saw foreigners as bringing different, positive values. In their eyes, many foreign cultures emphasize values that would also be good for Finnish society: family-centeredness, a broader concept of family, taking care of others, a
larger sense of responsibility for others, courtesy, respect for elderly people, and so on. It was also argued that Finnish people could learn friendliness and openness from foreigners and the arrival of different languages was considered valuable for Finnish society.

In the second instance, some officers said that foreigners bring professional skills and knowhow, and thirdly, some mentioned they could help to replace the soon-to-retire baby-boom generation.

F: “From the point of view of the labour market, they bring knew skills. I don’t know what job-related immigration is at the moment. But the baby-boom generation is soon retiring, is there going to be enough workers, in health care and all?”

Lastly, it was also noted that the presence of foreigners teaches Finns that people are similar despite of the cultural differences, and encourages Finns to open their eyes and expand their thinking, and to learn to tolerate difference. For example:

D: “It opens up points of view and understanding, when people see that the life of others is the same, that we are all similar. I mean there are differences, but still you see the similarities. I think it’s a good thing.

Supportive comments about the presence of foreigners in Finland were followed by some reservations. Only one interviewee did not express any misgivings about foreigners. The reasoning behind the reservations offered can be divided into five categories: 1) Abuse of social benefits; 2) Substance abuse and other addictions; 3) Crime; 4) Cultural differences; and 5) Poor commitment to the settling in process.

First, the abuse of social benefits was mentioned:

A: “It is bad when people come here for the social support benefits and abuse them. But it is the system that deals with settling in that is bad, they should come here to work, and work should be a prerequisite for money,
that people get something when they work. Here the money is almost taken to the airport, and they are asked ‘Are you going to be ok now?’; that makes people passive.”

RA: “So the negative thing is not the immigrants but the system?”
A: No, it’s the system, the way these things are handled here.”

Secondly, it was argued that sometimes young men who have come here first and then failed to get their families here also, end up having problems with alcohol and gambling:

E: “The only negative thing that comes to my mind is, hmm, young men. These young men come alone and... These family reunion regulations etc. have tightened up so much, and they can’t get their families here, I mean if young men can’t get the rest of their family here, they end up floating, as in a void, they need to have their parents and siblings, and their motivation to educate themselves or to move forward, is very weak without that network and support around them. I’ve seen that then the problems build up, there are problems with alcohol, gambling, I don’t know if there is also criminality and so on.”

In the third instance, like in the quotation above, civil servants mentioned crime as a reason for their reservations about foreigners, more specifically rape, drugs, crime in general, and the black market:

F: “When we talk about crimes and rapes, I think statistical facts have been presented that rapists are proportionally more often immigrants. This is one example. I don’t know if it’s a statistical illusion or something. And then there is talk about the black market. It exists, especially in the construction sector. I don’t know, these are the facts, but I don’t know if it has increased, with the increase of immigration.”

D: “There are these incidents of rape, they have been in the newspapers, but I don’t know if they are more easily reported than if it was Pena the
neighbour, do the media do it or is it the reality? And there are drugs and the drug world. These are the negative things. They don’t really come through my work, but through the media.”

The fourth reasoning category was cultural differences. According to interviewees, conflicts usually happen before immigrants have settled in and learned about, for example, different codes of behaviour and other cultural differences.

RA: “Does anything negative come to your mind?
C: “Well, before they settle in. We have difficulties understanding that their culture is different, the way of speaking is different, and when they are in Finland, they should think about what they say and how they behave. The Finnish nature is that it’s shouting if someone speaks in a loud voice, but when we go abroad, we notice it’s a normal way of talking. But when he comes to an office here, and raises his voice, we can say to him ‘Don’t raise your voice.’”

D: “There are clashes, due to ignorance. The other comes and acts in a totally different way, different from the way we are used to. Of course things like that. But they aren’t negative, they just happen. Both ways.”

Finally, some civil servants mentioned the difficulties caused by immigrants’ insufficient understanding of the settling in process and procedures. According to one officer, problems may arise before the immigrant understands how the bureaucracy works, and accepts that things may take time before they get organized. Also, according another officer, there are occasionally problems in terms of the commitment with which some immigrants approach their settling in plan:

F: “Our clients are told about the rules, rights and responsibilities and they are required to commit to them. Then, of course, not all clients will commit but leave for long vacations, these kind of negative things.”
5.2 Immigration should be increased

In general, immigration was seen as positive and was expected happily to increase in the future, but again some reservations emerged. Five of the six interviewees argued that, even at this moment, society could not meet all the needs of immigrants, a primary consideration being, for example, the availability of employment. It was, however, underlined that were society able to respond to immigrants’ needs, then increasing immigration would be a good thing. One civil servant agreed with the statement and did not present any misgivings at any point. Initially, three civil servants supported this statement, but very quickly the remarks of two became increasingly doubtful. Three voiced reservations from the beginning.

The reasons for supportive comments can be divided into six categories: 1) *Cultural influence*; 2) *The increase of immigration is natural*; 3) *Finland can accommodate more immigrants*; 4) *Immigrants help to replace the retiring population*; 5) *Finland’s refugee intake is small compared to other countries*; and 6) *Immigration should be increased to reunite families*.

The benefits of new cultural influence were the first reason cited for supporting the increase of immigration, the second, was the claim that immigration and its increase were natural.

F: “Yeah, it increases anyhow, if the possibility is given. Immigration is based on voluntariness. If there are conditions to receive them. Grows naturally. But should it be actively increased? I think this is about the job-related immigration?”

During discussions, the interviewer also asked specifically about the officers’ attitudes towards immigrants who come due to job or family reasons. The remarks prompted by this additional question was entirely positive. For example:
RA: “What about people who want to move here and who already have a job?”

A: “Of course, certainly! That is totally different thing. Certainly people who come here to work and who cope with their lives. It is a different matter.”

Thirdly, it was argued that Finland could accommodate more immigrants:

E: “There are big differences in the numbers of immigrants in different countries, there would be space for more people here, and it could be increased, it would be good.”

The retiring Finnish baby-boom generation was used again as a reason to increase immigration (fourth reasoning category) and it was pointed out that Finland’s quota for refugees/asylum seekers is significantly smaller than in other northern European countries (fifth reasoning category).

The interviewees also reasoned that immigration should be increased in order to reunite the families (sixth reasoning category) of those refugees and asylum seekers who have come to Finland alone, or with only some of their family members.

E: “Immigration should be increased, but now what is happening is the opposite, due to the changes in the law, and I think that’s bad, especially with these family reuniting cases... Here, like I already said, retirement increases and so on...”

The reasons for reservations about the statement, can be divided into five different reasoning categories: 1) The unwillingness/incapability of municipalities to accommodate immigrants; 2) The lack of possibilities for jobs and education; 3) Insufficient staff at the SCR; 4) Unfit settling in practices and 5) Immigrants already in Finland should be employed first.
Firstly, officers pointed out the discrepancy between the quotas set by the government and the ability and willingness of municipalities to accommodate refugees\(^7\). One officer, for example, said:

F: “About the reception of refugees, the problem is, that the parliament has decided the yearly quota to be 150 persons and, if I’m correct, the quota has not been filled because there are no placements in municipalities. Feels funny that the people chosen already have not come to Finland and then we go to choose new ones. So in this situation, is it possible to increase the quota when the ones already chosen do not have placements in the municipalities? It has been the same quota for years. Relatively small compared to other northern countries. Is there a need to increase the quota, the realities must not be forgotten, is there a possibility in the municipalities to receive...? The quota is 70 in Tampere. Difficult questions.”

The second reasoning category consists of arguments about the lack of possibilities for jobs and education. For example:

B: “There need to be possibilities to educate oneself, and to work. Now there are not.”

D: “A job needs to be organized, and tools to cope with one’s life and family, and to support the family. We say ‘Welcome to Tampere’ but what can we offer? There should be a balance. I don’t say that immigration should be decreased, but this is enough, what we get at the moment.”

Thirdly, civil servants argued that immigration should not be increased due to a lack of resources and staff. They pointed out that even now the system does not work, because there is not enough staff. It was suggested that the resources and

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\(^7\) The Finnish government has a yearly quota of how many immigrants and asylum seekers are accepted. However, before these immigrants are able to come to Finland, municipalities need to agree to accommodate these people. (Maahanmuuttovirasto, 2013.)
the number of people received need to be in balance – if more people are to be received, the number of staff would also need to be increased.

C: “This cannot be, how it is now. There is just not enough staff.”

D: “If people come to work, then it is ok, but if not, the resources should be increased.”

The fourth reasoning category consists of commentary criticising current immigration and settling in practices and the inability of the officers to influence the practices.

A: “So if this goes as badly as it has been going until now, added to by the fact that we, the officers, have very little power to influence anything, even though we really see the defects that exist, then immigration should not be increased.”

C: “I think this work should be done in a more sustainable way, for example, many children come here alone, and great investments are made for them and after reuniting the family the investing ends. At some point a lot of good work is done, but then it plateaus, and they are left to cope on their own.”

Before moving to next statement, the researcher also asked the interviewees about an active increase in job-related immigration. To reply to the researcher question, officers pondered, whether it would be possible to educate the immigrants who are already in Finland, instead of increasing immigration.

RA: “What do you think about job-related immigration? In order to bring in professionals? Do you think job-related immigration should be actively increased?”

E: “Yes, I don’t know, I’m a humanitarian, doing social work, these engineers working for Nokia and the Brazilian dentists who are here, they are probably ok and bring professional skills and knowhow and so on… But like
I already stated earlier, we have a good education system, and our refugee clients can attend, and are of the right age, even adults, not to mention children. So, I mean, why should particularly this type of immigration be increased, because we can educate the immigrants who are already here?"

F: “It is a fact that we already have immigrants here, who are unemployed, is it impossible to educate these immigrants? We have people here who have all the prerequisites, and without any hindrance to entering the labour market”.

5.3 Finnish society should change to accommodate multiculturalism better

Three of the interviewees agreed with the statement immediately and argued that society has to change, and all voiced explanations as to why and in which ways. One officer began by claiming that, instead, settling in should be dealt with differently, but soon remarks turned to how society should change. One officer voiced uncertain opinions at first by stating “I don’t know”, before pondering why and how society should or might change, and then finally argued against the statement. One interviewee disagreed with the statement by asserting that Finnish society had already changed enough and presented multiple examples of existing changes.

At the very beginning of the interview, four out of five civil servants supported the statement immediately. For example:

A: “Finland stays Finland even though we have immigrants. We don’t have to hold on so tight, especially when I don’t know what that is, the things that people hold on to so tightly.”

The reasons given to support the statement can be divided into the following six categories: 1) Change is natural and inevitable; 2) Attitude change of the local population is needed; 3) Treatment of immigrants in other offices needs to change; 4)
Supply of jobs and courses has to increase; 5) Interaction has to be promoted; and 6) Immigrants need to be involved in the planning of immigrant-related issues.

Some officers started by acknowledging that Finnish society has already changed quite significantly and continues to change all the time. The first reasoning category in support of change stressed not only that Finland is part of a wider world and that society alters due to interaction between different cultures, but also that change is itself simply an inevitability. For example:

F: “It changes all the time, due to the interaction with immigrants. It should change. We don’t live in a vacuum but in an international world. I would say that probably society changes along with it... which one comes first, the chicken or the egg? Anyway, society does change, it’s not static.”

The second reasoning category consists of comments about the need to provide the right information and knowledge in order to change the attitudes of the local population. The civil servants brought up the spread of incorrect information and the negative impact it has on Finnish people’s perceptions of and attitudes towards humanitarian immigrants. This topic prompted lively remarks and some strong arguments. According to one officer:

A: “I get so annoyed when I read about or listen to the opinions of The True Finns’ Halla-aho (one of the members of parliament) because the things he says, really suck, he doesn’t know anything about anything. Then the people who have the opposite view—dyed-in-the-wool8 [liberals]—defend their opinions and they don’t know anything either. It’s in the structures of the society, whatever it is.”

AA: "Somehow knowledge should be increased. The right kind of information, correct knowledge. When we talk about refugees, we can’t talk about anything, we can’t go and set up a bulletin board about immigrants, about who these people are, there are laws banning it. There are these

8 In Finnish: henkeen ja vereen
negative attitudes and beliefs, that the immigrants are mostly men, they come here, hang around in bars and take all the women, especially young men. There are quite a few of them, but the thing is, they have nothing to do and that’s probably the reason they hang around in those bars.”

RA: “You mean that there should be information about why the people have come here?”

A: “Yes, something like that. To emphasize that they are human beings, that all should be able to live here in Finland. But it’s about money, always. People think that the immigrants get stars from the sky here in the social office. But it isn’t like that. They get exactly the same as any other client.”

RA: “Can you give some examples of what the society should do?

A: “Somehow it has to come from Parliament and the President, that it is not an option, but normal life, multiculturalism. It should come from the top of society, that these people are here, and that they will always be here and that’s it. That way some consistent manners could be found. At the moment, the people who support this multiculturalism don’t have enough authority and are looked down on. The discussion should be transparent and open, base on facts, to increase knowledge.”

According to this officer, the authorities should take a more active role in improving the attitudes of the local population, by circulating the correct information about immigration and immigrants and by making it clear that Finland is already a multicultural society and always will be. Another officer gave examples of Finns who live in the same buildings as immigrants, passing on incorrect information, which in turn leads to negative attitudes. This interviewee mentioned, for example, the stereotype of an immigrant who steals Finnish women. A third officer mentioned that due to the negative attitudes of the local population, immigrants face difficulties in finding employment.

The third reasoning category is about the change needed in the attitudes and working methods of civil servants who work in municipal offices. One interviewee commented that the attitudes of civil servants, especially in smaller municipalities, are overwhelmingly negative towards immigrants and really need to change:
C: “I don’t know how long it will take in Finland, in bigger cities the attitudes have changed, but in smaller towns, let’s say, the attitudes of officials, for example, in the TE Office, are quite opposing, really. Even though it is pretended they are not. For example, I can say that I have seen, I would say, racist features. And if these people decide about immigrants’ matters, it needs to change.”

Another officer voiced criticism about how the immigrants are being perceived and treated in the municipal offices:

RA: “Do you think the society should be more flexible towards immigrants, for example in swimming halls or elsewhere?”
D: “Hmm. Certainly, in all services. What I’ve noticed through my own work is, that the officers from the normal services ask me to take care of immigrants’ issues, they say ‘You take care of this one because you know.’ But I can’t know about everything. So I think attitudes should change, all should get the same service, people should be met as people.”

The fourth reasoning category consists of comments about the lack of work and language courses. The interviewees emphasized the responsibility of society to promote and organize employment and language education.

F: “We need employers and companies to get involved in this settling in. To offer jobs and possibilities to enter working life.”

A: “People who come here, they have done something in the past to support themselves. Here they have no possibilities. Especially in Tampere. Cleaning companies are the only ones that take them for half a year and then when the payment support runs out, they lay off this person. And these people don’t understand what happened. Maybe two out of hundred get a job as bus drivers. So it is not possible, here we try to settle people in, for them to learn this normal life that in the morning we go to work and in the evening
we take care of the family and the children. They get frustrated when they don’t have anything.”

RA: “So the society could change by offering jobs?
A: “Yes, exactly. Of course learning the language is the key thing, but that could also be better organized, let’s say, two hours language learning, and six hours working. Jobs that don’t require talking are very rare, so they could learn also while working.”

The fifth reasoning category that was used to justify the support for the statement consists of remarks that interaction between immigrants and local population should be promoted. Firstly, the officers pointed out that society should settle the immigrants evenly among the local population, in order to avoid ghettoisation and it’s negative consequences, such as the differentiation of living areas into ‘good’ and ‘bad’, and the increase of fear and crime in the latter. One of the officers reasoned that physical proximity would lead to greater contact and would improve relationships between different cultural groups.

D: “This is going to change, inevitably, when immigrants start to live also in areas other than the big cities. If immigrants come into your own circles, you have to face the change. And people will see that all people are similar, albeit different. Society changes when it has to change, if we want to keep it this way, that we can walk outside in the evenings, [maintain] basic safety and peace in society.”

Also another officer mentioned the importance of cultural contact, and its impact on attitudes among the local population:

F: “And it is also the concrete level, how immigrants are met in everyday life. It begins from small things, change. Society, meaning us. The government, municipalities or the private sector is not the same thing as the everyday encounters of individual people. But there is research, that attitudes have improved... that they are not that radical.”
The sixth reasoning category consists of commentary stating that immigrants should be taken on board in planning matters which concern them. The importance of seeing immigrants as active agents in society and getting them to participate in social planning, especially practices that are directed at immigrants themselves, was emphasized:

F: “Immigrants, like everyone else, are also responsible for their settling in, they need to be able to participate more in the development work. We have this immigrant council, where we discuss and collect suggestions...”

The qualifying and opposing remarks which were expressed can be divided into five reasoning categories: 1) Society already welcomes immigrants well enough; 2) It is uncertain if anything can be done; 3) The presence of negative attitudes towards some people is normal in a society; 4) Society is already flexible enough; 5) If the society changes too much, Finnishness will be lost.

One civil servant reacted to the statement with both reservations and opposing comments and by asking questions. Three different lines of argument can be followed in this one quote:

B: “I don’t know. Should it change? More multicultural? I don’t think it has to change. I think the society welcomes the immigrants pretty well as is. Well. Of course there are people who don’t accept it. But I always say that immigration has always existed, and there have always been people who have not been accepted, people who have been called names and so on. So it is never ready. But does it have to change? How could it change? How could it be changed?”

Firstly, it was noted by this officer, that society does not have to change because it already welcomes immigrants well enough (reasoning category 1). Secondly, one reason offered for the respondent’s reservations, is the uncertainty that something could actually be done in order to improve negative attitudes towards some groups in society (reasoning category 2). Thirdly, the officer considers the
presence of negative attitudes as normal, and implies that there are no circumstances where negative attitudes do not exist (reasoning category 3).

Another officer expressed very clearly that the society does not have to change – his/her initial remarks opposed the statement, and the justification proffered continued in the same vein:

E: “I think our society is very flexible and tolerant, gives room enough, and if we go too far, then we lose our own culture and what we have here. I’m just a bit conservative, or how do you call them (laughing), by saying: ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do (Maassa maan tavalla).”

E: “There has to be a limit... In Tampere, we already have two mosques and...”

From this quote two different rationalizations can be found. The first, that, according to this officer, Finnish society does not have to change because it is already flexible enough (reasoning category 4), and secondly, that if Finnish society changes too much, Finnishness will be lost (reasoning category 5). This respondent provided multiple examples to illustrate how society has already changed, listing, for example, the things which parents may determine for their children in day care – which diet, cultural activities, religion, singing etc. they wish their children to follow. The officer also pointed out that legislation limits the flexibility of Finnish society towards foreign cultures:

E: “When I think about our work, we take the [original] culture into consideration all the time. But at the same time we tell them about our laws, for example the law that protects children, that states that here no one gets hit. We can’t say that go ahead, live by your own culture and hit your children and each other, because the law here forbids it.”
5.4 Societal skills and knowledge are most important – immigrants do not necessarily need to form relationships with Finnish people

All interviewees uniformly and strongly agreed that societal skills and knowledge are most important. However, five interviewees disagreed with the second part of the statement and argued that relationships with Finnish people are highly important. Three of these five officers were coherent and unswerving in their support of the need for refugees and asylum seekers to forge local relationships. The arguments of two other officers fluctuated between the point that ‘relationships are needed’ and ‘they are not essential’. One interviewee at first disagreed, and then agreed with the second part of the statement, but later contradicted himself/herself once more.

Those interviewees who opposed the second part of the statement voiced very strong counter-arguments, especially at the start of the discussion. Some, for example, began by saying:

A: “Of course they need them. It is the alfa and omega of everything.”
B: “Of course this is not true. Immigrants do need to have relationships with Finnish people.”
C: “I think relationships help a lot in adaptation.”
D: “Of course they are important (skills and knowledge), but you can’t get them without contact with the locals.”

Reasons supporting the need to form relationships can be divided into five categories: 1) Relationships help in everyday life, 2) Relationships help in learning Finnish, 3) Relationships increase cultural understanding and 4) Immigrants have expressed a wish to know Finnish people, 5) Relationships with Finns are crucial for children.

Firstly, it was argued that Finnish friends could help and act as supporting persons in immigrants’ everyday lives:
A: “With everyday life... I know one immigrant mother who has five children, they all live at home, small and big. They have a neighbour, who sometimes babysits, a Finn. But this person is the only one I know. But one is always better than none.”

Some interviewees brought up abused women and elderly people and their inability to create any relationships. Officers talked about some women who mainly stay at home, and their inability to acquire either skills or knowledge, or relationships. It was also mentioned that elderly people often suffer from loneliness due to living arrangements or other difficulties. However, for women and elderly people it was mostly about the importance of relationships in general, not specifically about relationships with the local population.

E: “Some mothers told me, that they have activities, as a group, they meet once a week and so on. And some other mother asked me, if we couldn’t continue with this peer support group, because they have nothing. Only staying at home or attending a course.”

A: “There are also immigrants who only come here due to marriage, or those who are kept between the fist and the stove. They need to have some kind of support in forming relationships.”

C: “Elderly immigrants, they are left aside. They live alone in those small apartments. I think that when they move here, they get older very fast. When they come, they are able to function, but I feel they deteriorate very quickly when they come here.”

F: “One grandmother came to live here, alone, because the rest of the family was living in another apartment. This grandmother was very lonely and anxious because she had been used to living with the others in her home village. But because the family was so big, there was no apartment big enough for them. Cultures are so different.”
The second reasoning category consists of comments that local relationships help in learning the language. The third reasoning category, on the other hand, includes remarks that local relationships help to increase understanding between different cultures. It was emphasised that Finnish friends are particularly useful in reducing and eliminating incorrect assumptions about Finns and Finnish society:

A: “The contacts would increase understanding. Of course civil servants give you the basic information, but what is better than a friend who advises you what to do? You can get a lot more from that... Also it would be easier to understand this sullen atmosphere.”

D: “One family was wondering whether all children are hanging around in the city with beer bottles. They were wondering if that was real life in Finland. They don’t know that the majority of children are with their families and have hobbies etc. I mean that the wrong impressions develop very easily, if you don’t have relationships. Among immigrants, [there are] wrong impressions about what is the normal life. When you don’t have anyone you can ask.”

The fourth reasoning category consists of remarks describing what the civil servants had heard immigrants themselves say about getting to know Finnish people. Interviewees related their own experiences of clients who had voiced a willingness to acquire local friends:

D: “It often happens that our clients want us to be more than civil servants, they invite us for coffee etc. I’m only a social worker, but they don’t have anyone else, to whom they can open up. It is easy to talk to an outsider. The willingness is there, but the language for some... they think they don’t speak good enough Finnish. Surely they cope better if they have the knowledge and skills and contacts. Everyone is sorry that they don’t have the contacts.”
E: “Many are suffering from not having contact with their neighbours. Because they have been used to that, to knowing their neighbours. They would like to know them better.”

The fifth category of comments supporting the need to interact socially with Finnish people stressed the importance of relationships for immigrant children:

E: “It’s essential for children, as I see it. In the beginning, how much they suffer when they are outsiders among Finns, of course, when they don’t know the language, they are lonely. It’s very important for their children, the more they learn the language, the more they become chosen as friends. It’s important for their children. Here I would make a distinction between adults and children.”

Some of those interviewed voiced either qualifying and/or contradictory remarks having initially opposed the statement, responses which can be divided into the following three reasoning categories: 1) In some cases relationships with their fellow countrymen MAY be enough; 2) The best way to get correct information is from their fellow countrymen; and 3) Relationships with their fellow countrymen ARE enough.

Firstly, one interviewee stated that while it would certainly help in many ways, immigrants surely cope without relationships with local people. Secondly, another officer first disagreed with the statement and claimed that immigrants need to forge relationships with Finns. However, when the interviewer introduced the idea of relationships with fellow countrymen, the officer emphasised the importance of compatriots as sources of information about social codes of behaviour:

RA: “What about their fellow-countrymen, what if their circle of friends consists of their compatriots, do you think that is enough?”
B: “Yes, that is surely enough. That way you get new information, the correct information, how things are in Finland, how things are been taken care of. Why not? If you think about Europe, all these immigrants, not all of
them ever learn the language even though they spend all their lives here. There they go with other immigrants, and are helped by them.”

Thirdly, when the discussion turned towards adults and various compatriot associations and immigrant peer groups and the willingness of immigrants to participate in such groups, another officer began to express some reservations, and ultimately supported the crux of the statement:

E: “But when you look at these associations, we have one for each nationality, Somalis may have two, Afghans, many different ones, Kurds, Russians and what ever else and they are in their own groups. But they are mostly for the adults. I think this is different for children than for adults.”

RA: “What do you think, if we talk about adults, for example Somalis, who have their own associations, relationships with each other, and the knowledge and skills to cope in the society, do you think that it matters whether contact is with their fellow-countrymen, or with Finns?

E: “It doesn’t matter. No, it doesn’t matter.”

5.5 In addition to employment, it is good if immigrants adopt ‘Finnishness’ in all areas of life

In cases where the interviewee asked for examples of what ‘adopting Finnishness’ might include, the researcher offered the examples of social relationships, family, ways of thinking, principles, and values. Employment referred to the Finnish settling in legislation, which emphasises the role of employment in settling in (The Act on Integration, 2010). All interviewers considered employment important but the mention of employment in this statement did not itself elicit any further comment. Instead, all officers focused their attention on the notion of adopting Finnishness. All officers disagreed with the second part of the statement: two right from the outset, and the remaining four upon some reflection. Many mentioned that Finnish laws were not to be violated, but otherwise the immigrants should be allowed their
‘own ways’. When the rights of women were discussed, reservations were expressed.

Two officers noted at the beginning of their remarks that during the three years in which most of their clients use the services of SCRR, adopting Finnishness is not something they generally observe:

E: “This statement, I think, these things start to show when a person has been in Finland for a longer time.”

F: “This ‘adopting’ is a very strong word… it is a long process.

Arguments given for not adopting ‘Finnishness’ in all areas of life, that is opposing the statement, can be divided in two categories: 1) It is important to maintain one’s own culture; and 2) Tolerance and knowledge of differences are enough. Almost all interviewees emphasized the importance and need for one’s own identity, culture, history and values. According to the officers, the culture of heritage should be maintained, and immigrants should not try to become too ‘Finnish’, but rather make some adjustments to the practice of one’s own culture in order to be able to live in Finnish society:

C: “I think all that you have should be your own, but you can modify it to fit with Finnish society. But you should not try to become a Finn. Because I think that is the most foolish way.”

It was also argued, that immigrants could be and think as they wish, and maintain their own culture, as long as it did not contradict Finnish law. One interviewee gave the example of childrearing practices:

A: “In that sense they need to adopt Finnishness, if we talk about parents, in other cultures many parents slap their children, and it doesn’t mean anything, but here it is forbidden. That much you have to assimilate, to know it is forbidden. Especially if you happen to slap a bit more, then there
are officials and all. You have to understand what you are allowed to do. It is very common, the slapping of children. They don’t think of it that way, for them it is normal.”

Another officer gave an example of harmful traditions that are also forbidden by legislation:

E: “For example girls’ circumcisions, and forced marriages and honour-related violence and so on. All these harmful traditions and values, they must not exist.”

Secondly, it was argued that respecting other cultures and tolerating the differences between different cultures was important, not the adoption of Finnish culture (reasoning category 2). One civil servant also pointed out that it is beneficial if immigrants understand what Finnishness is, and another suggested that once immigrants get to know Finnish culture better, they might choose the best aspects of Finnish culture to adopt, if they wanted to do so. All officers emphasized the importance of knowing other cultures and being able to live together, side by side, in harmony. For example:

A: “It’s good to know what Finnishness means. But they don’t, these values and principles and so on... of course the immigrant can be himself and think differently from us Finns, it’s a two-way street, both should know and aim to live in peace. If you think differently on your own, that’s ok. I don’t say that you have to adopt, but you have to know, that doesn’t mean adopting, but you have to accept that the others are different, do things differently and think differently.”

This statement also garnered some reservations and supportive remarks, which can be divided in two categories: 1) Good things could be adopted and 2) The position of women should be improved. First, it was suggested that it would be advantageous if immigrants were open to adopting good things from Finnish culture, to shape their own culture:
D: “They could pick up the good things, they could abandon some old things, like we also do, it is not carved into stone. Thinking evolves, when people get older, you start to think that ‘I could do otherwise’. The way you think about life changes. Openness to adopt new things. They need information, the right information.”

Secondly, the position and rights of women elicited some reservations and mixed responses (reasoning category 2). The officers talked about the position of women in some immigrant cultures, the way women only stay at home, do not have the possibility to voice their opinions and how men (the fathers and sons) seem to have power over the mothers and daughters. It was nevertheless noted that women should have the right to live their lives as they choose.

E: “Especially in Arab families you notice that the wife really is just next to the stove, I mean, I think about the family picture, when I see how tired the mother is, and only there, at home. And when I go there to talk, it’s always the father who replies, even though I try to ask what the wife thinks. And still the husband answers.”

D: “If the woman is there, at home, next to the stove, if she would like to leave, if she gets the feeling that she would like to do other things also, she should have the right to do so. But if she is happy there, and gets the knowledge and skills needed in the society, I don’t see why she can’t be there.”

Secondly, respondents pondered what could and should be done in order to empower female immigrants and to make them more active. Legislation was mentioned, justifying the need for change to the position of women, as well as the uncertainty if anything can be done:

A: “And when we try to get the women to participate, even just one thing, they don’t usually, most of the time they are at home, and without the
husband, or the oldest son, they don’t go anywhere from home. We have pretty well managed to get them to come to, there is, for example, this mother-child club. They start to come there, and after they get more courage. And notice that it is safe to walk outside and so on.”

B: “If the man has so much authority, that the woman has no possibility to go anywhere. Then we should intervene.”

C: “Now that we live in Finland we talk about Finnish law and what the position of a woman has to be and violence in families and everything. That doesn’t change even though we would like it to change. I mean that the position of the woman at home would be good.”

5.6 The three most important things for adaptation are: adoption of the new culture; maintaining the old culture; and participating in the society

All civil servants initially agreed with this statement and concurred that the three steps mentioned were either very important or central to an immigrant’s acclimation. In five of the six interviews, however, initial agreement was followed by a number of reservations or qualifications: officers wanted to redefine adaptation, adoption or participation according to their own terms. When prompted by the researcher, each officer presented further examples of things they considered crucial, such as the presence of family members, an immigrant’s own will to stay, to settle in and to let go of his/her country of origin, and the feeling of being welcomed.

While the statement itself gave the word adaptation, five officers alternated the use of adaptation and settling in, and in the analysis of their commentary, these terms have been broadly interpreted to describe the end result of a process of acculturation. One officer defined and discussed the two concepts separately and this is shown in the quotes.
Five interviewees supported the statement by agreeing that adopting the new culture, maintaining the old culture, and participating in the society are indeed the most central dimensions. One officer otherwise agreed, but emphasized that people also should have the right to choose whether or not they want to participate. Initial comments in support of this statement were very short:

A: “Yes, just like that, these are the main things.

C: “That’s how it goes. The new and the old meet. To adopt a little bit of something new, and the old has to be maintained in some way. Participation in the society to some extent.

D: “These are pretty central things here.

F: “It seems that when you adopt, maintain, and participate… This covers everything.

Having agreed, officers began to contemplate the meanings of the words adopting, adaptation and participating, and then supported the statement according to their own understanding of these terms. In this way, remarks that were initially supportive instead began to express a series of qualifications, which can be categorized as follows: 1) Accepting instead of adopting, which should mean only positive things; 2) Adapting implies force, settling in is better; 3) Participation should mean social and not political; and 4) Also other things are important.

In contemplating the definition of the word adopt, one officer stated that accepting would be a better expression, that it is enough if the immigrant accepts the new culture. Another wanted to know whether adopting meant that a new cultural value or custom is actually practiced, or just that it is simply acknowledged and accepted.

A: “Hmm. I don’t agree with the word adopt. You don’t have to adopt, but maybe [just] accept.”
E: “I just want to make sure that I understand this sense of adoption correctly, that it doesn’t mean, it doesn’t mean that things are being put into practice, but people know and recognize them, for the parts that need to be put into practice. But it doesn’t mean they have to put things into practice in the sense that ‘now we change our own culture?’”

It was also suggested that, in this context, adoption and maintenance were important only insofar as they applied to the good sides of the new and the old culture:

D: “But what do you mean by adopting new things, maybe to adopt the good things, I don’t recommend drinking beer at the central square, that they should concentrate on good things. And the maintenance of the old culture, for example physical discipline of children, that you shouldn’t maintain.”

One officer insisted on separating these terms, pointing out, that adaptation implies force, while settling in is softer:

F: “Adapting is a bit, like you have to adapt to the circumstances, like the saying ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do’ (maassa maan tavalla), adapt or leave. Adapting and settling in, settling in is a bit softer as a concept. But adapting includes all these [things listed in the statement].”

The expression participating in society also provoked contemplation. Three officers defined it in discussion mainly as political participation, which only becomes possible after some time. Three others saw it as participating, for example, in children’s school-related issues, working, taking courses, learning the language or forming contacts with local people. However, all considered participating in society important, and particularly social participation.

B: “Of course you need to adopt somewhat, and maintaining the old is very important, within the family, and for yourself. Participating in society
depends on the family, if they want to. I think that after some years, if they want, they could, but that it takes time. I would let the family, the client, make the decision.”

F: “And participating is a long and slow process. Language is very central. Political participation comes with time.”

E: “And what then does participation mean? I go to Finnish language courses and participate in parents meetings at school and kindergarten and so on. Otherwise, participating in society, it takes time, before you can take part. The way we have talked about politics and so on, before you are somewhere there.”

Once the researcher asked the interviewees to think about other things important for adaptation (in addition to cultural adoption/maintenance and participating in society), all officers listed other aspects which they considered to be crucial. Four civil servants mentioned the importance of having families together:

B: “The majority of families are incomplete. Children without siblings, men have come alone, women without their spouses, without grandparents. They worry a lot. And the situation in the home country also causes worry.”

D: “And surely that you have your family here, no parents or other people have been left behind and that they are all ok. Relatives are always in their minds even though they can be all around the world. It is easier to orientate yourself here if you also have your family here. This is the way they think.”

E: “For example, if the Finnish Immigration Service denies the family reunification and the family can’t come here, those who end up not getting their families here, face, for example, a lot of psychological problems. Why is the basic unit of family taken away from a person? Of course family is the most important thing...”
F: “Of course family, family is not mentioned here. Family and close relationships. Family is very important. These people come from cultures where the family is their basic unit. You can have grandparents and... I would add family. And if the family works well, that is the ideal situation. That the family is here. There are many lonely people. They should go and start to look for contacts. These people are used to solving their problems together.”

Two interviewees mentioned that adapting to Finland also requires an immigrant’s motivation and willingness:

D: “Your own will. That you don’t live a double life, one from eight to four and then you have another world when you go home. It should grow stronger, the thought that this is now the home country, and then your attitude will be different.”

A: “You can’t talk about settling in, if you all the time think that everything is in a bad way and nothing is going to work. I don’t mean any overwhelming gratitude of being here, I don’t mean that. But the reality, that now we are here, and what has happened before, that needs to be handled as well. But to think how to move forward from here.”

One civil servant argued also that the feeling of being welcomed and accepted is important:

E: “Adaptation, you need to feel you are worthy, as a human being, and are being treated like that. You also need to feel you are part of this system. A general atmosphere of acceptance, that you are welcomed here. When no one talks to or smiles at you, or the neighbours... One group of refugees once asked ‘Where are all people?’ (laughing).”

This last reasoning category can be seen to contradict initial comments which stated that cultural adoption and maintenance and participating in the society
were the three most important things for adaptation. It should be noted, however, that the discussion occurred only after the researcher’s request to think about other important things.

5.7 Settling in

The comments provoked by this concept are divided according to those criteria which appear in the Act on Integration (2010) and those which do not, and each and every interviewee mentioned both. Five interviewees talked about settling in generally, and the remaining respondent split his/her remarks between the factors important to the settling in of children and the settling in of adults. As the statement used in the first interview was quite different, material from that interview has been used only to the extent that the interviewee talked particularly about settling in.

The criteria mentioned by the officers which also feature in the legislation were 1) Employment; 2) Skills and knowledge; 3) Language; 4) Interaction with the local population; 5) Maintenance of the original culture; and 6) Participating in society. Three officers mentioned employment or other activities (for example, taking part in courses) as crucial for settling in. According to two of them, employment gives individuals the opportunity to feel important and needed. Four civil servants emphasized the importance of skills and knowledge to be able to cope in society, and two specifically mentioned the need to be able to take care of one’s own affairs. Four interviewees saw language as crucial for settling in. For three of the six, contacts and interaction with the local population were important, however one other officer, considered contact with Finns to be crucial only for children, and not for adults who can survive with the friendship of compatriots or other immigrants. For two officers, maintenance of the culture of origin was important, for example:

D: “It’s about knowing how to function here, but you shouldn’t forget your past, culture, because it’s part of your identity, it doesn’t go away, even
though you are here in Finnish society, the values and principles, from where-ever you’re from.”

Participating in society was not directly mentioned, but one officer hoped for greater possibilities for immigrants to influence the planning of their own lives, and another mentioned the importance of getting out from one's home.

A: “It should be more reciprocal, in order for this not to be the way it is, that we just dictate, tell them what to do. That can lead to disinterest and apathy.”

E: “And also, after you get the basic things organized, you get out from your home, start courses, learn the language and go places, you don’t just sit at home.”

All officers talked about and emphasized the psychological aspects of settling in. This category consists of psychological factors that are not mentioned in the legislation.

Firstly, for three officers, settling in involved motivation, positive attitude and willingness. For example:

A: “It’s positivity, openness and willingness. And courage. For example, if you know a little Finnish, you start talking, even though you make mistakes. It’s willingness, willingness to cope, making the decision to cope. With these, you go far. And you can make miracles happen; for example, some middle-aged people succeed in their studies. You have to decide that I’m going to cope well.”

F: “A human being is a psychophysical whole. The motivation is important. The way you see your settling in.”

Secondly, feeling good was mentioned by three officers:
C: “Settling in is a good feeling, that you feel good about being here. Or, I mean good and good, in relation to the fact that you need to be here.”

A: “I think settling in should be a good feeling, of having been able to escape from a place where you couldn’t have a good life.”

Thirdly, three officers brought up the feeling of belonging and attachment; being at home, feeling that Finland has become a home country and the sense of no longer being a stranger.

F: “And maybe also, that little by little, first your thoughts are probably with your old home country, with those left behind, and you follow what is happening there. After settling in, you become more attached to this place, here.”

C: “The feeling of belonging to some place, that I’m not a stranger here.”

E: “It means that you have adapted, you have settled down, know how to operate, feel this is somehow your home country, in a way, that it’s not terribly distressing and you don’t feel very bad.”

One officer concluded at the end of the interview:

D: “You have to feel that you have a life worth living here.”
## 5.8 Summary of classifying analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes in reasoning for supporting arguments</th>
<th>Themes in reasoning for opposing arguments</th>
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| **1. Foreigners are good for Finnish society** | 1) Positive cultural influence  
2) Professional skills and knowhow  
3) Replace the baby boom generation in the labour market  
4) Induce positive attitude change among local population towards foreigners |
| | 1) Abuse of social benefits  
2) Substance abuse, other addictions  
3) Crime  
4) Cultural differences  
5) Poor commitment to the settling in process |
| **2. Immigration should be increased** | 1) Cultural influence  
2) Increase is natural  
3) Finland can accommodate more  
4) Replacing the baby boom workers |
| | 1) Unwillingness/incapability of municipalities to accommodate immigrants  
2) Lack of possibilities in education/ jobs  
3) Insufficient number of staff of the SCR  
4) Difficult settling in practices  
5) Immigrants already in Finland should be employed first |
| **3. Finnish society should change to accommodate multiculturalism better** | 1) Change is natural and inevitable  
2) Attitudes of locals need to change |
| | 1) Society already welcomes immigrants well enough  
2) It is uncertain if something can be done  
3) Presence of egalitarian attitudes towards some people is normal in society  
4) Society is already flexible enough  
5) If the society changes too much, Finnishness will be lost |
| **4. Additional skills and knowledge are most important** | 1) Societal skills and knowledge are the most important |
| | 1) Relationships with the fellow countrymen MAY be enough  
2) The best way to get correct information is from the fellow countrymen  
3) Relationships with fellow countrymen ARE enough |
| | 1) Relationships help in everyday life  
2) Relationships help in learning Finnish  
3) They increase cultural understanding  
4) Immigrants have expressed a wish to know Finnish people  
5) Contacts are crucial |
| **5. In addition to employment** | 1) Employment is important |
| | 1) It is important to maintain one’s own culture, if it does not contradict with the Finnish legislation  
2) Knowledge of Finnishness and tolerance for differences are enough |
| **6. Three most important things in adaptation are: adoption of the new culture, maintaining the old culture and participating in the society** | 1) These are the main, crucial things, covering everything |
| | 1) Accepting enough, instead of adopting. Should mean only positive things  
2) Adapting implies force, setting in is better  
3) Social participation is important, political participation takes time.  
4) Also family, motivation and will and the feeling of being welcomed and accepted important |
| **7. Setting in** | Mentioned in the legislation |
| | 1) Employment  
2) Skills and knowledge  
3) Language  
4) Interaction with the locals  
5) Maintenance of the original culture  
6) Participating in the society |
| | Not mentioned in the Legislation  
1) Psychological factors  
2) Motivation, positive attitude, willingness  
3) Feeling good  
4) The feeling of belonging and attachment |

Table 1. Summary of classifying analysis
6 Interpretive analysis

This interpretative analysis answers the research questions that were introduced in chapter 3.3:

The first research question is: *When civil servants, working with immigrants, speak about foreigners, immigration and immigrants, what specific objects do they evaluate and what rationale do they use in making their evaluations?*

The second research question is: *What attitudes do the same civil servants demonstrate towards the importance of different dimensions of the acculturation process, the two-way change of society, and acquiring employment, societal skills and knowledge?*

Throughout the six interviews, similarities emerged amongst responses to the statements and several themes can be found from the material. In order to attempt to answer the first research question, the material will be considered as a whole; with reference to the second research question, remarks in response to statements three to seven will be used. The main findings of the interpretative analysis have been summarised in a table. After the research questions have been answered, the different subjects of the evaluations will be considered and the role of the context examined.

6.1 Evaluations of foreigners, immigration and immigrants

According to Vesala and Rantanen (2007), the object of evaluation cannot be assumed (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 41), and, depending on the context, different evaluations of a same object can be expressed by the same subject (Ibid, p. 58). Many different objects for evaluation can be found from the material and they will now be considered in relation to the first research question.
6.1.1 Different immigrant groups

*Foreigners* The first statement included the word foreigner and at the start of the interviews, the officers clearly talked about foreigners in general. Foreigners were seen as entitled to enter Finland and thought to bring positive influences through cultural variety. Cosmopolitanism was seen as a positive and desired trend which foreigners brought to Finland. While one remark at first seemed to imply adverse consequences to this foreign presence, it may be read as only suggesting that any negative aspects should be accepted as normal and commonplace:

RA: "Does anything negative about foreigners in Finland come into your mind?"

1B: "No, not really. My opinion is no, because we all, all nations, have something negative. No not really. I can’t say anything bad. Because I don’t think of it like that. We are all human and make our own mistakes."

*Immigration and immigrants in general* Another object of evaluation that can be found from the material is immigration and immigrants broadly conceived, without any reference to a specific type of immigration. Immigration was regarded positively and its increase natural. Immigrants were perceived to bring professional skills and knowhow and to replace the retiring baby boom generation in the labour market. Their presence was also seen to bring about positive attitude change towards immigrants among the local population and to contribute new languages and values.

*Voluntary immigrants* The interviewer asked specifically about the officers’ opinions towards immigrants who come due to job-related or family reasons. Officers agreed that work and family-related immigration should, and probably will, naturally increase in the future. Many officers particularised this type of immigration from immigration as a whole as ‘a different matter’ and ‘a different situation’.
RA: “What about people who want to move here and who already have a job?”

2A: “Of course, certainly! That is totally different thing. Certainly people who come here to work and who cope with their lives. It is a different matter.”

RA: “What about those immigrants, who come here to marry, or those who have a job?”

2B: “Well, those are different.”

RA: “So it can be said that you can come if you have prerequisites to support yourself?”

2B: “Exactly. Then it is a different situation.”

Employment, or the ability to support oneself, was, however, emphasised when voluntary immigration was discussed and the following comment states that the increase of voluntary immigration is acceptable in the case of work. Even without employment, however, this officer does not voice any opposition to an increase in immigration, provided further resources are made available to help with the greater numbers:

2D: “If you come here to work, it’s ok, but if not, then we need more resources.”

*Foreign talent* This group of voluntary immigrants was considered welcome, but the increase of this type of immigration unnecessary. It was suggested that instead of bringing in more foreign talent, those immigrants already in Finland should be educated to fill the needs of the labour market.

*The clients of the SCRR – returnees* Returnees were mentioned only very briefly and particularised from other customers by the acknowledgment that they settle in quickly and need very little support in comparison with refugees and asylum seekers.
The clients of the SCRR - humanitarian immigrants

All interviewees spoke mainly about, and provided examples of, their own clients, and thus most of the time the objects of evaluation were humanitarian immigrants, namely, refugees and asylum seekers, the clients of the SCRR. Positive evaluations of humanitarian immigrants cited the same factors mentioned in evaluating immigration in general, namely positive cultural influences and contributions to the work force.

Throughout discussions, humanitarian immigrants were described as people who, in many instances, are dealing with terrible pasts, often have multiple problems, whether the result of psychological or physical trauma, the breakdown of the family unit, illiteracy or otherwise insufficient education, or education/experience not recognised in Finland. Officers often further pointed out the numerous difficulties which humanitarian immigrants face when entering Finland, where everything, starting with the climate, is different and strange. Those immigrants with less education and experience particularly struggle, even with simple things, and may not, for example, be familiar with paper as a material and a means to make a contract:

6D: “Sometimes we start with a paper, ‘What paper?’ We say: take a pen and make a cross.”

Humanitarian immigrants were mostly evaluated as active and willing to work hard to settle in. Many examples of success stories were given, to illustrate that immigrants had succeeded in learning Finnish and completed higher education or got employment:

7E: “For example, one man, right after his arrival, told me that he wants to go to the university. I told him to learn Finnish first. Ten hours a day he learned Finnish, he got in to the university and is now graduating.”

7E: “I had one client, he told me immediately that he will not go to social services for money, that he will learn the language and get a job. And so he did.”
The increase of humanitarian immigration prompted contradictory responses. On one hand, there was support to increase humanitarian immigration in order to reunite the families of those who had arrived alone. Reuniting families was considered as a probable solution to the problems of some young men. It was also maintained that Finland’s quota for receiving humanitarian immigrants was small and that Finland could accommodate more immigrants. On the other hand, however, all officers expressed concern that current resources were insufficient to cope with any increase. While it was acknowledged by many that Finland’s intake was indeed smaller than other nations and that the country did have a responsibility to receive asylum seekers and refugees, some officers opposed any momentary increase in humanitarian immigration due to the lack of resources to assist settling in and the shortage of jobs available.

Humanitarian immigrants were also considered to be linked to the following problems: abuse of social benefits, addiction, crime, rape, black-marketeering, lack of commitment to the settling in process and cultural differences. When considering more closely, however, the reasons which participants proffered throughout the interviews, multiple objects for criticism, other than humanitarian immigrants, may be found.

6.1.2 The system

The problems linked with humanitarian immigrants were most often explained by ‘the system’, which has been interpreted here to mean official policies and their day-to-day practice in Finland, as related to immigration and immigrants. The system, as an object of evaluation, was seen in a negative light and received a lot of criticism throughout discussions. One officer, who brought up the ill-use of social benefits, argued that any abuse was the result of a system in which payments were not dependent on work, while according to another, the social security system reduced the initiative of immigrants and rendered them passive:
1A: “It is bad when people come here for the social support benefits and abuse them. But it is the system that deals with settling in that is bad, they should come here to work, and work should be a prerequisite for money, that people get something when they work. Here the money is almost taken to the airport, and they are asked ‘Are you going to be ok now?’, that makes people passive.”

RA: “So the negative thing is not the immigrants but the system?”

1A: No, it’s the system, the way these things are handled here.”

7F: “The settling in here, it does indeed, when everything comes ready-made, it suffocates all initiatives.”

The officer who mentioned crime and addiction among young immigrant men argued that, when they are denied the chance to bring their families to Finland, due to the tight immigration legislation, these young men lose their motivation to settle in, which leads to problems. The same officer noted that there are no special programmes for these young men in their 20s and 30s, to support them and to prevent their marginalisation.

1E: “The only negative thing that comes to my mind is, hmm, young men. These young men come alone and... These family reunion regulations etc have tightened up so much, and they can’t get their families here, I mean if the young men can’t get the rest of their family here, they end up floating, as in a void, they need to have their parents and siblings, and their motivation to educate themselves or to go forward, is very weak, without the network and support around them. I’ve seen that then the problems build up, there are problems with alcohol, gambling, I don’t know if there is also criminality and so on.”

1E: “These young men should be directed to right path, so they don’t cut themselves off. They lack a direction in their lives. And there are no programmes for them, not even in the third sector, all the programmes are for younger, or for older men.”
RA: “Are you talking about men in their 20s and 30s?”
1E: “Yes, and they arrive in big numbers.”

Unemployment and a lack of courses or other activities were used to explain many problems associated with humanitarian immigration, like, for example, crime and rape:

1F: “Maybe it is [the reason], for crime and rape, because we can't offer, for these people who come here as clients, enough suitable activities, somewhere they could go, to a course or a job, to energize them.”

Unemployment was also used as an explanation for the existence of black-marketeering among immigrants:

7F: “To set up a pizzeria, you should take the entrepreneur course, you need a little bit of sustainability. You shouldn't just buy a pizzeria and leave the taxes unpaid. But of course, there are no jobs that you can get without education.”

And finally, the lack of employment or other meaningful things to do were considered as partly responsible for the low commitment to settling in:

7A: “It is like, 'you have to do this and this and that', we should have something good to give to them, not just to tell them that you have to go back to school...That if they would like to, they could go to work, that we could organize a place to work. Nice that we talk here, while knowing that you won't get any job anyhow. You need to give them the possibility to be important. And a job gives you that. It exists a lot, the negativity, your mind grows dark and you think about...”

Also the lack of influence over your own affairs was mentioned as one possible reason for the weak commitment of some to the settling in plan and their lack of motivation to settle in:
7A: “[Settling in] should be more reciprocal, in order for it not to be like it is, that we just dictate, tell them what to do. That can lead to disinterest and apathy.”

6.1.3 Media and statistics

Two officers who mentioned drugs, rape and the black market used the media and statistics as common places (Billig, 1986, pp. 229-230) in justifying their remarks about these problems among immigrants. These officers, however, also contemplated whether the higher crime rates were real or a perception perpetuated by the media, or whether crimes committed by immigrants are more readily reported than those perpetuated by the local population, i.e., just a statistical illusion. It was also emphasized that these negative aspects only come through the media, not through their own work. In other words, the media and statistics were seen as partly responsible for the negative issues associated with humanitarian immigrants.

6.1.4 Cultural differences

Cultural differences were evaluated both positively and negatively. Sometimes they were considered to be the cause of difficulties, such as in understanding behaviour, but it was also claimed cultural differences have a positive effect on Finnish society, by bringing colour and variety.

6.2 Attitudes towards the importance of different factors in the acculturation process

Material from statements three to seven will be used to answer the second research question, and the topics which will be considered are those presented in the statements: two-way change in society; relationships with Finnish people; adopting Finnishness; the balance of cultural adoption, cultural maintenance and
participation in society, and employment, societal skills and knowledge. Again, the objects of evaluation as well as their justifications will be sought from amongst the relevant commentary.

6.2.1 Two-way change in society

In the first instance, the interviewees demonstrated a supportive attitude towards the idea of changes to Finnish society. It was seen as the inevitable and natural consequence of an increasingly international world. The officers went so far as to identify those sectors of the society seen as responsible for initiating the further changes needed to support the settling in of immigrants, and this way many different objects of evaluation emerged. Decision-makers and the system were considered to bear the responsibility of settling immigrants evenly among the local population, to avoid the negative consequences of ghettoisation and to promote interaction and relationships between different groups. The same objects of evaluation were also seen as responsible for involving more immigrants in the decision-making process and for offering employment and suitable courses. Private sector employers and companies, on the other hand, were held responsible for offering jobs. Politicians and public authorities were held accountable for changing the attitudes of the local population, by disseminating the correct information about immigration and immigrants, and setting a clear policy of multiculturalism and tolerance. Officers working in governmental offices were thought to need to change their attitudes towards, and their working methods with, immigrants and to treat immigrant clients similarly to their Finnish counterparts.

Conversely, attitudes also showed opposition towards changes in society. One object of evaluation revealed by their comments was institutions, in this case, the childcare system and schools. These were considered as having changed enough to receive immigrants well and to support multiculturalism; further changes were thus seen as unnecessary. A concern was also voiced, that too many changes and concessions might threaten Finnish culture. So, as an object of evaluation, Finnish culture was, on the one hand, considered as a constant, not in need of change, and
vulnerable to the influence of immigrant cultures. These lines of reasoning can be interpreted to indicate that once certain concessions and adjustments have been made to Finnish society, the responsibility to adapt—to the society and the culture—lies with the immigrant. On the other hand, Finnish culture was considered to be likely to change in the future regardless, and the positive influence of other cultures should be welcomed. Some aspects of Finnish culture, like, for example, the habit of alcohol consumption, were considered themselves to be in need of change.

Some further opposition was shown towards the need for change in the attitudes of the local population. That a number of Finnish people held negative attitudes towards immigrants was judged to be simply a fact of life, and was consequently considered as very difficult, maybe even impossible to alter. This type of rationalisation, while not opposed to eliminating or softening such attitudes, saw rather little possibility to effect change. Conversely, and as discussed, the majority of the officers considered the need to change the negative attitudes of local people towards immigrants to be very important, and frequently raised the topic for discussion throughout the interviews.

6.2.2 Relationships with Finnish people

When the object of evaluation was adult immigrants, reservations initially emerged about the importance of forming relationships with Finnish people. Adult immigrants were seen to benefit from relationships in general, but not necessarily from relationships with Finns. Abused women and elder immigrants were specifically seen as needing contact of some form. For some adult immigrants, the relationships with compatriots were thought to be sufficient, in those cases where societal skills and knowledge had already been acquired. Comments about relationships with fellow countrymen, however, were voiced only after the researcher raised the possibility, which in all likelihood influenced remarks.
Conversely, relationships with local population, for the object of adult immigrants, also found support in the attitudes of some officers: relationships with Finnish people were considered to be valuable in everyday life, in the learning of Finnish and in gaining the correct information about society. Finnish friends were thought to be the best source of information about social codes and practices, although it was also suggested, that compatriots were an equally good source.

When the object of evaluation was mothers of small children and children, attitudes towards forming relationships with Finns were also supportive. Contacts with local people were considered important for mothers with many children, and crucial for the children themselves. Finnish neighbours were seen to be potentially helpful to mothers in everyday life (babysitting, being one example), and for children, local friends were seen as essential in the process of settling in.

The need for relationships with Finnish people was also justified with examples of instances where immigrants themselves have told the officers that they considered relationships with Finnish people to be valuable and they wished to make Finnish friends. Immigrants were seen as communally-minded people, coming from collective cultures where relationships, for example, between neighbours, were closer than in Finland.

6.2.3 Adopting Finnishness

In the first instance, support existed for the idea of adopting Finnishness, when the object of evaluation was the ‘good’ features of Finnish culture and the negative features of the original culture. What constituted a ‘good’ feature was not described in any detail during discussions; the reference to positive things was thought to be understood. In contrast, the law was used to define what aspects needed to be changed; in other words, any traditions or values of the original culture which in some way violated Finnish law were to be abandoned or modified with respect to the law. When no contradiction in law existed, it was emphasised that immigrants
should have the right to decide themselves what practices or values they would maintain or adopt.

Through comments regarding immigrant men who dominate or abuse women, some officers also exhibited attitudes in support of the adoption of Finnishness. The freedom of choice in cultural maintenance was stressed less when the object of evaluation was dominating men who control or abuse other family members. When discussion turned to women's rights and position, officers were not at all averse to an embrace of Finnishness in the treatment of women. For example:

5C: “We live in Finland and talk about Finnish legislation and how the position of women should be and domestic abuse and so on. These things don’t go like we would like them to go. I mean that the position of women should be secure at home. There are violent attitudes within the families. If a woman goes to a shelter and moves to her own home, she needs to disappear or go back to the husband. And the husband can take the children, and if the whole family with all relatives are here, and the honour of the husband has been insulted, it just doesn’t work.”

Once the notions of taking on the ‘good things’, replacing illegal cultural practices or improving the position of women were set aside, there was, nevertheless, opposition to the adopting of Finnishness, based upon the importance of maintaining one’s own culture. The individual’s own culture was evaluated as something character-defining, a meaningful part of one’s identity, which should not be changed. The comments also suggested that it should instead be possible to modify the culture of origin to fit better with Finnish culture, without a person becoming ‘too’ Finnish. Attempts to change into a Finn were seen as undesirable and foolish. The word adopting was described as too strong, and it was stressed that it was enough if immigrants understood what Finnishness and Finnish culture were, and respected the differences between cultures.

Finnishness was mainly considered to refer to cultural values and practices. However, Finnishness was also seen as identity, something that should not be
adopted by immigrants. Values and principles were considered to be part of identity and as a private matter, and in no need of be changing.

6.2.4 Cultural adoption/maintenance and societal participation

The interviewees’ initial remarks supported the statement that claimed that cultural adoption, cultural maintenance and societal participation were the three most important things in adaptation. It is very likely, however, that the way the statement was formulated influenced the officers’ responses. When these specific dimensions are considered separately, different objects of evaluation emerge from the material and opposing attitudes are also indicated.

Cultural adoption, was, on the one hand, considered to be too demanding, and to interfere with the maintenance of the culture of origin. The officers’ comments consistent with their earlier remarks about the adoption of Finnishness; it was seen as enough that immigrants knew and accepted Finnish culture, abandoned illegal cultural practices and abided by Finnish law. On the other hand, adopting the ‘good’ features of either culture was evaluated as a positive step, while adopting their ‘bad’ aspects was seen as a negative one.

In the second instance, the word adapting was evaluated to be too strong, implying force or coercion, or describing a situation in which an immigrant was offered no other choice or any other way to cope. The concept of ‘settling in’ was seen better and softer, and as describing the good feeling of being comfortable and at home in Finland.

A third object for evaluation was the new culture, in this case Finnish culture. In the same way as Finnishness, respondents spoke of Finnish culture as a source of beneficial principles and practices, which merited adoption, like, for example, equality between men and women. Alternatively, Finnish culture was also criticised and associated with declining values. A lack of communality and the rise of consumerism in society, for example, were mentioned. Accordingly, Finnish
culture, in the eyes of the officers’, might benefit from adopting some features of immigrant cultures.

Immigrant cultures, then, when raised as an object for evaluation, were considered to maintain many positive customs and tenets missing from or now lost to Finnish culture. Conversely, immigrant cultures were also described as having negative features, such as the inequality of men and women, as well as harmful traditions, for example, the circumcision of girls and so-called honour-related violence.

The fifth object of evaluation that interviewees’ addressed in their remarks was participation in society. Participation, in the first instance, was understood as political participation, which was considered to be valuable and even desirable. Improving the process of settling in, it was argued, required the involvement of immigrants in decision-making at both the political, and individual level. It was acknowledged, however, that political participation was demanding, becoming possible only after a longer period of time, and given it was probably not necessary in every immigrant’s case, involvement should only be the result of an immigrant’s own volition. Social participation was also judged to be important, and particularly crucial for the learning of language and gaining the right information about Finnish society and culture. It was, however, also argued, that social participation may be difficult, or even impossible, without a certain level of knowledge of the language. It was also stated that social participation should similarly be voluntary.

The researcher asked the officers to nominate other things they considered to be crucial, and the following criteria were identified: family, motivation and will, and the feeling of being accepted. From these comments two more objects of evaluation emerged. Firstly, immigrants were seen to be people from collective cultures, for whom the presence of family was crucial for their mental wellbeing and of enormous benefit to the settling in process. Immigrants were also evaluated as bearing the responsibility of their own motivation and willingness to settle in. Secondly, Finnish society and its people were evaluated as responsible for creating an atmosphere of acceptance and for making the immigrant feel welcome.
6.2.5 Employment and societal skills and knowledge

The importance of employment, societal skills and knowledge was unanimously supported and emphasised throughout discussions. Firstly, societal skills and knowledge were evaluated to be of primary importance, and seen both as an *end result* of settling in and a *means* to settle in. Language and relationships with Finnish people were evaluated most often as *key* to achieving the necessary social skills and knowledge. Secondly, when officers spoke about employment, the term was sometimes followed by the notion of 'having something meaningful', or having the 'feeling of being important and useful'. In other words, employment itself was important, but might be replaced by something else that had meaning. Employment, like societal skills and knowledge, was evaluated as one *end result* of the settling in process, and a *means* to settle in. It was also judged to be something that should be mandated in order to obtain financial support. Conversely, respondents emphasised repeatedly that finding employment was difficult for immigrants in Finland. Employment was thus considered to be highly problematic in the sense that, despite its importance, it was out of reach for the majority of humanitarian immigrants.
6.3 Summary of interpretative analysis

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Table 2. Summary of interpretative analysis
6.4 Subjects

According to Vesala and Rantanen (2007), in the Qualitative Attitude Approach, the subjects of evaluation must also be examined (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 42). All interviews took place in the offices of the Social Centre of the Refugees and Returnees in Finland, in order to emphasize the official role of the civil servants. During the course of discussions, none of the officers mentioned any other roles or positions, by referring to themselves, for example, as a parent, or as a taxpayer. Nevertheless, three additional subjects of evaluations emerged from the analysis of their remarks, namely, a private self, a Finn and a resident of a developed, wealthy state.

The role of civil servant The subject in the majority of comments was civil servant. The interviewees primarily supported their arguments by giving examples of their own clients or criticized the settling in procedures they dealt with at work. The role of civil servant was also emphasised in remarks about the negative attitudes of Finnish people. This can be seen, for example, in commentary in response to the third statement, in which one officer particularizes herself/himself from other Finns by emphasizing the role of a civil servant working with immigrants:

3A: “Somehow the knowledge, of Finns, should be increased. We here, at the office, we can’t talk about anything, we can’t go and give information about these immigrants, about who these people are, there are laws that forbid us from doing that.”

The role of private self Some officers spoke about their private selves by commenting that they did not wish to associate with immigrants in their free time, or that they wanted to be thought of strictly as officers, and did not, for example, accept any invitations to coffee. This issue was raised when officers illustrated their clients’ desires to make Finnish friends. They sought to emphasize the line they preferred to draw between their working and their private lives. However, this role appeared only rarely.
3B: “I don’t have any immigrant friends. But many might have. I have to
admit, it is probably because if this job, that I don’t want to mix my work
and my free time.”

The role of Finn In some comments the subject was a Finnish person, a role which
came to the fore when officers referred to Finnish society and its people, as can be
seen, for example, in remarks here, where the officers describe the introverted
nature of ‘we Finns’. Also this role was assumed less and appeared mainly in
commentary about the Finnish character:

1B: “We are sulky.”

1D: “We Finns are a people of the forest (mettäkansaa), only now the
immigration has started to increase, and now the doors are open both ways,
before we immigrated and now people from other countries move to
Finland.”

The role of resident of a developed and wealthy state One more subject evident in the
material was a resident of a developed country that can afford to receive, and has a
responsibility to receiving humanitarian immigrants. When considering the
current intake of humanitarian immigrants, it was commented that Finland’s quota
was a lot smaller than that of other developed Western countries, indicating some
officers also cast themselves in the role of a wealthy country with a responsibility
to assist humanitarian immigrants.

6.5 Role of context

As previously stated, attitudes are not isolated statements defining someone’s
stance towards something but affected by the rhetorical context of argumentation
(Billig, 1996, pp. 255-256). Moreover, attitude is a whole consisting of multiple
parts: the one who presents the attitude, the attitude itself, the object of the
attitude, and the context (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 20). In the QAA, attitudes are considered to interweave actors, interaction and social reality, which is why the material is also examined from a perspective that takes into account social and cultural context.

According to Vesala and Rantanen (2007), people express the attitudes they can or want to express (Vesala & Rantanen, 2007, p. 38). The interviewees were civil servants and the interviews took place at the offices in which they worked. It is not unreasonable then to assume, that the officers expressed those attitudes they felt able to reveal within the professional context of their office and their role as civil servant. By extension, in a different context, they may have chosen to air more negative attitudes, which in this instance were either withheld completely, or given softer expression. Some officers did express concern about the confidentiality of the interviews, particularly before expressing negative comments or qualifications.

Furthermore, an interview itself creates a context and an atmosphere which then influences responses, by creating, for example, a situation where the interviewer has power over the interviewee, whether by setting the agenda or controlling the data (Mason, 2002, p. 80). One civil servant, for instance, expressed a fear of ‘giving the wrong answers’, or being unable to share anything important.

It can thus also be assumed, that some critical information is missing from the commentary, due to the apprehension of the officers, or equally that not all comments represent the thoughts of the officers, who may have sometimes simply felt the need to say something, albeit anything. The researcher was a relative stranger, a social psychology student, whom the officers knew to be studying immigration in Finland and settling in, and they may also have felt themselves to be under evaluation.

The current economic downturn in Finland is a further context, and earlier research has shown the attitudes of the population to be generally more negative in times of economic hardship (Elinkeinoelämän valtuuskunta, 2012). In the case of this study, however, the attitudes found were not negative towards foreigners,
immigrants or immigration, so economic circumstances do not appear to have overtly influenced the interviewees’ comments.

Immigrant-related issues are strongly present in current political discourse in Finland, which also probably bore some influence over the officers’ responses. Some officers, when expressing the negative things associated with immigration followed with an apology, emphasizing that in their work they had to deal with reality, that problems existed, but that they did not want to increase the negative attitudes already prevalent among the local population.

7 Discussion

In this chapter, the findings are discussed first in terms of the existing research on attitudes and then in relation to definitions of integration as an acculturation orientation in social psychology, and the idea of settling in as it features, in immigration legislation. The comments provoked by the concept of settling in in response to statement seven, will also be discussed. Finally, ideas for future research, an evaluation of the method, the limitations of this study and ethical issues, will be presented.

7.1 Findings in relation to earlier research and the legislation

The first research question was about the attitudes of civil servants towards foreigners, immigrants and immigration. The attitudes indicated in this paper are in line with the earlier research of Pitkänen and Kouki (1999), who found that social workers thought immigrants were good for Finnish society (Pitkänen & Kouki, 1999). The findings of this study share similarities with Pitkänen (2007), who drew attention to a polarised perception among civil servants, where immigration is considered favourably, but its corollary, multiculturalism, is seen to be challenging and difficult (Pitkänen, 2007, p. 317). The officers in Pitkänen’s study listed, among other things, a lack of staff, funding and time, and cultural differences
as reasons for their negative perceptions (Pitkänen, 2007). Each of these factors also emerged in this study, in the rationalisation of negative commentary regarding immigrants. An ethnic hierarchy as such did not materialise; voluntary immigrants were seen to be more welcome than humanitarian immigrants, but only insofar as voluntary immigrants were able to support themselves. Preference was not overtly shown for any one ethnicity, or for particular skills or higher education. On the contrary, the officers favoured furthering the education of immigrants already residing in Finland, over increasing the immigration of highly educated professionals. No racist attitudes surfaced. The only immigrant group that was negatively evaluated were those immigrant men who dominated and abused their wives.

The second research question sought to discover which factors of the acculturation process the officers considered important. The topics that were studied were the notion of a two-way change to society, relationships with Finnish people, adopting Finnishness, cultural adoption/cultural maintenance and participation in society. The interviewees’ thoughts about the significance of employment and societal skills and knowledge were also considered. Finally, the officers were asked to define the concept of settling in, as an opportunity to describe in their own words what they understood the process to entail. These findings are now discussed in relation to Finnish settling in legislation and the acculturation orientation of integration, in order to determine in what ways the officers’ attitudes resembled or differed from the legislative and social psychological interpretations.

Integration has been shown by many studies to be the most functional acculturation orientation. Some definitions of integration in sociology and political science include the notion of a two-way change, where both immigrant and society are expected to change (for example, Modood, 2006). This expectation is implied in the Act on Integration (2010) which lists the responsibilities of society to promote the settling in of immigrants (The Act on Integration, 2010). In the results of this study, society and its different sectors were, in the first instance, considered to be responsible for making some changes to promote the settling in of immigrants and to improve the negative attitudes of the local population towards immigrants. This
attitude was in line with the Act on Integration and the definition of integration, which comprehends two-way change. Conversely, the interviewees also maintained that the society did not need to change, as it had already sufficiently changed and received immigrants well. Their opposition to further change bore some resemblance to Pitkänen’s study (2006) where the author found that immigrants were expected to adapt to existing procedures and ways of operating (Pitkänen, 2006, p. 115). Lastly, while it was acknowledged that some sections of the local population viewed immigrants unfavourably, their negative attitudes were largely considered to be an inescapable part of society, and although the majority of officers considered attitudinal change desirable, it was seen to be difficult, even impossible to achieve.

According to Berry’s (1997) model of acculturation, *relationships with society* are important to integration, and the Act on Integration (2010) equally aims to encourage good relationships and communication between cultures (The Act on Integration, 2010). In general, the interviewees too upheld the importance of immigrants forming relationships with Finnish people, in line with both the definition of integration in Berry’s model (1997) and the Act on Integration (2010). The first stance clearly taken by respondents advocated that relationships with the local population were valuable for everyone, and crucial for children. Immigrants themselves were also understood to value and desire the connection. A second attitude that emerged supported contacts in general for adult immigrants, and emphasised their significance for women and elderly immigrants. Lastly, a third school of thought maintained that while social contact was important, in some instances forming relationships with just compatriots might be adequate for adult immigrants. The final finding is questionable, however, due to the interviewer’s possible influence.

Bourhis et al. (1997) suggest that integration means maintaining the culture of origin and adopting the culture of the host community. For Hutnik (1986), on the other hand, integration is about identifying with both majority and minority groups. The Act on Integration (2010) stresses the importance of maintaining old cultural heritage and mentions learning the language and acquiring societal skills
and knowledge, but does not otherwise promote cultural adoption. During the course of the interviews, three different attitudes towards the idea of adopting Finnishness came into view. The first upheld maintaining the old culture, provided it did not contravene Finnish law and foresaw no other need to adopt Finnishness. This stance then concurred with The Act on Integration (2010) and was also comparable to the findings of Snauwaert et al. (2003), which suggested that identification with the host group was not essential for integration. The second attitude, to the contrary, supported the adoption of the ‘good’ features of Finnish culture, and the third considered the adoption of Finnishness specifically in the treatment of women as desirable amongst some immigrant men. The second and the third attitudes, in the sense that they implied a stronger preference for cultural adoption, more closely followed the definition of integration offered either by Bourhis et al. (1997), or by Hutnik (1986). It should, however, be noted, that the officers spoke mainly about cultural values and practices when they referred Finnishness, and not identification or identity change per se, in which case the findings are not wholly compatible with the model Hutnik (1986) proposes. However, if adopting Finnishness is understood to mean identification with the Finnish population, the attitudes that oppose its adoption reveal the preferences of the dissociative individual, rather than the acculturative individual. The attitudes that the officers expressed towards the importance of adopting Finnishness conform to the research of Anders-Toth and Van der Vijver (2006) and Navas et al. (2007) who stated that in the private sphere or at the cultural hard core, separation is the favoured acculturation orientation.

When the acculturation models of Berry (1997) and Bourhis et al. (1997) are considered together, the dimensions which define integration are adopting the new culture, maintaining the old culture and participating in society; the final two measures are also written into the Act on Integration (2010). Three different attitudes surfaced in the officers’ comments towards these three different courses of action. In the first instance, there was no support for cultural adoption, or rather it was not considered of primary importance, when acceptance and knowledge of the new culture were sufficient. A second attitude asserted the great importance of maintaining the culture of origin, although it was emphasised that any illegal
practices should be abandoned. Lastly, a third standpoint upheld the significance of voluntary participation in society, understood primarily to be societal rather than political participation, the latter being less important and coming only after considerable time. These attitudes coincided with the Act on Integration (2010) and Berry’s (1997) definition of integration in the emphasis they placed upon the importance of maintaining the culture of origin and participating in the society. Where cultural adoption is considered to mean things other than language and societ al skills and knowledge, the interviewees’ attitudes diverged from the definition of integration in the model of Bourhis et al. (1997), in disregarding the importance of cultural adoption.

Each officer regarded employment, and gaining societal skills and knowledge as important, in line with the Act on Integration (2010), but employment especially, was seen by those interviewed as highly problematic and difficult to achieve.

Earlier in this paper it was discussed that research has shown integration to be the best acculturation orientation, and one that Finland promotes through its Act on Integration (2010). In the original Finnish, the legislation and the officers in the SCRR employ the word kotoutuminen, which in this paper has been translated as settling in. The points the officers listed when asked to describe settling in were divided into two groups, those specifically mentioned in the Act on Integration (2010) and those that are not. Settling in for the officers meant, in the first place, finding employment, acquiring societal skills and knowledge, learning the language, interacting with Finnish people, maintaining the old culture and participating in society. All of which are mentioned in the Act on Integration (2010) and also adhere to Berry’s (1997) definition of integration. In the second instance, psychological aspects were also seen to play a considerable part in settling in, which was judged to require motivation. An individual was considered to have settled in when he or she felt comfortable, and experienced feelings of belonging and attachment. Elsewhere in discussions, supportive attitudes emerged for the importance of uniting families and feeling accepted in society, points not mentioned in the Act on Integration (2010), but which have been widely studied in
acculturation social psychology. Due, however, to the limitations of this paper these will not be discussed any further.

7.3 Future research

This thesis looks at the attitudes of a small sample of officers working in an office serving the needs of immigrants in Finland. As such, it should be noted that the interviewees have received cross-cultural education and have a good understanding of the difficulties immigrants face in Finland. One interviewee mentioned the negative attitudes of civil servants working in other offices. According to Liebkind (2001), acculturation happens in social reality and is influenced by intra- and intergroup relations which either support or challenge the process of acculturation (Liebkind, 2001, p. 399). Future research might then be conducted, for example, in the TE Office, with the expectation that mapping the situation could lead to improvement. The ideas of the officers working in the SCRR, on ways to improve the settling in process, also offer an avenue for future research.

7.4 Evaluating the method

The QAA accentuated the diversity of attitudes towards foreigners, immigration, and immigrants and drew attention to the importance of the different factors of the acculturation and settling in processes. Multiple objects for evaluation emerged, as well as key areas of contradiction and areas which the officers considered to be problematic. The statements encouraged free discussion where various topics surfaced, and ultimately the QAA proved to be a good method for answering the research questions.

Some of the statements may have worked better had they been simpler. The two first statements worked well, discussing them proved effortless and straightforward, and their analysis was similarly clear-cut. The third and the seventh statement were likewise unambiguous. The remainder of the statements
(4, 5, 6), however, proved too long and were difficult for the interviewees to grasp. The statements may have been better had they included one topic instead of two. For example, the statement *Societal skills and knowledge are most important – an immigrant does not necessarily need to form relationships with Finnish people* would probably have worked better as two separate statements. The concept *Settling in* did not fulfil the requirements of a statement and thus could not be analysed using the principles of the QAA. Furthermore, as some of the statements were ambiguous and overlapped with each other, the same objects of evaluations emerged many times over, while other, relevant information may simply never have come to light. One or two of the statements could also have been phrased negatively and been more provocative, in order to excite stronger arguments.

### 7.5 Limitations of study and ethical issues

The limitations of this paper are the small number of interviews conducted and the scant number of interview statements. The SCRR is a small office, fewer than twenty people work there, and only a handful participated. The number of statements also needed to be limited, because it was not possible to take up too much of the officers’ time during working hours.

Another limitation was the interviewer’s lack of experience. For example, one officer was extremely reserved and taciturn throughout the interview, often expressing fatigue, and the interviewer was not sufficiently skilled to draw out enough thoughtful responses to some of the statements. A more experienced interviewer may have handled the situation better and been able to provoke more discussion. Furthermore, someone with more experience would have been able to recognise the key topics better, as they surfaced, and generate more focused arguments. Those problems that did arise might have been avoided or better solved with some previous experience of using the QAA, like, for example the formulation of the statements.
One ethical issue raised by this study was the potential stress triggered by the interview; the officer who expressed fatigue, for example, also voiced a fear of not being able to give good answers. Ensuring confidentiality was of the utmost importance, due to the small number of officers working in the SCRR. It was necessary to modify some of the quotations slightly, in order to omit information that might reveal the identity of the interviewee.

The researcher resided abroad while conducting and writing this thesis and it was not always possible to obtain all the relevant reference material, and for this reason many second hand sources have been used.

8 Conclusion

This study examined the attitudes of a small sample of civil servants, working with immigrants, towards foreigners, immigrants and immigration in Finland, as well as their attitudes towards the importance of different dimensions in the acculturation process.

The results of the study indicate that in general, attitudes towards foreigners, immigration and immigrants in Finland, were positive, but the support was not without qualification. In cases where immigration required the support of society, as with humanitarian immigration, it was considered to pose potential problems, because society could not provide adequate resources to settle these immigrants in properly.

Attitudes towards the importance of the different factors in the acculturation process mostly mirrored the legislated concept of settling in, as well as the definition of integration as an acculturation orientation; the attitudes acknowledged the importance of two-way change in society, relationships with Finnish people, maintenance of the culture of origin, social participation, employment and the acquisition of societal skills and knowledge. Conversely, whereas some social psychological acculturation models consider cultural
adoption or identification with the host population as one dimension of integration, the officers did not evaluate cultural (excluding language and societal skills) or identity adoption to be important. Rather, knowledge and acceptance of other cultures were considered to be enough, provided Finnish law was always respected. Only in the improvement of the position of women, was the adoption of Finnish values was supported.

One issue that provoked contradictory responses was cultural differences, which was judged to bring both positive influence and problems. Attitudes also proved equivocal when confronted by the attitudes of the local population towards immigrants, views which, on one hand, were thought to need improvement, but on the other, were seen as inescapable and very difficult, even impossible to alter. Finnish culture, too, was viewed from antithetical perspectives. It was seen as naturally, continually evolving, and yet eternal; or deficient in certain respects in comparison to foreign cultures, but at the same time threatened by those foreign influences.

Two issues that are not emphasised in the legislation or the acculturation models were evaluated as highly important in supporting the settling in of immigrants: the need for accurate information about immigration and immigrants, to improve the attitudes of the local population, and the presence of family.

This study then gives an overall understanding of the variety of attitudes of a small number of civil servants working in one public office, serving the needs of immigrants. What now awaits further examination, are the attitudes of civil servants working in other offices, to learn the extent of their understanding of the settling in process of immigrants, in relation to the legislation.
References


Äikäs, M. (Personal communication, May 24, 2012).
Appendices

Appendix A: Introductory / confidentiality letter

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Pro gradu-tutkielma maahanmuutosta ja maahanmuuttajien kotoutumisesta Suomessa.

Hei,

Olen opiskelijana Helsingin Yliopistossa, pääaineeni on sosiaalipsykologia ja teen maisterintutkintoni osana Ethnic relations, cultural diversity and integration-ohjelmaa (www.helsinki.fi/eri/).

Tutkimukseni käsittelee maahanmuuttoa ja maahanmuuttajien kotoutumista Suomessa. Kohderyhmäni on ulkomaalaisten parissa työskentelevät virkailijat, joiden ajatuksia olen kiinnostunut kuulemaan. Tutkimusmetodi on henkilökohtainen haastattelu, jonka tekemiseen kuluu noin tunti.

Haastattelu on luottamuksellinen ja vastaukset käsitellään nimettöminä. Tutkimuksen tekemisessä noudatetaan hyvää tutkimusmoraalia ja -moraaliala. Tunnistetiedot hävitetään tutkimuksen valmistuttua.

Tutkimuksen valmistumisajankohta on syksy/talvi 2012, ja tutkimus julkaistaan Helsingin Yliopiston verkkosivuilla. Tutkimuksesta toimitetaan kaksi painettua versiota Tampereen kaupungin työntekijöiden käyttöön.

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Reetta Alenius
Appendix B: Agreement letter

**Pro gradu-tutkielma maahanmuutosta ja maahanmuuttajien kotoutumisesta Suomessa**

Tekijä: Reetta Alenius
Helsingin Yliopisto
Ethnic relations, cultural diversity and integration
Sosiaalipsykologia

Osallistumiseni haastatteluun on vapaaehtoista ja voin keskeyttää haastattelun antamisen halutessani. Annan luvan vastauksieni käyttämiseen yllämainitun tutkimuksen tekemiseen.

Haastattelu on luottamuksellinen ja vastaukset käsitellään nimettöminä.

_____________________________________________________________________
Aika ja paikka

_____________________________________________________________________
Allekirjoitus ja nimen selvennys