

# Immigrant Integration on Åland – an exploratory study

Bogdan State



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## Preface

Åland has enjoyed a strong economic growth in recent years and is currently experiencing a significant immigration. While the number of immigrants is not big as such, it is considerable in relation to the total population and to immigration trends in earlier decades.

Bogdan State, who worked as an intern at the Åland Islands Peace Institute in the summer of 2007, carried out a study on the integration of non-Nordic migrants in the Åland Archipelago. This sociological study presents data on the situation of the migrants and their perceptions regarding integration in the Ålandic society. The study covered only the City of Mariehamn and is therefore not in any way comprehensive. It does, however, give indications and discusses the trends and can serve as a starting point for further inquiries and discussions.

During his survey and writing, Bogdan State had continuous contacts with a number of persons and institutions dealing with integration and migration issues in the Åland Islands, including the Integration Committee of the Government of Åland which presented its report in November 2007 and the Discrimination Ombudsman which published a report on discrimination issues in the islands in September 2007. He has also had many contacts and discussions with the Multicultural Association of Åland. In this way the work of Bogdan State has been a part of and has influenced the broader discussion on issues of integration in the archipelago.

The Ålands Islands Peace Institute hopes that there will be many points of interest in the present exploratory study and that there is a will to continue working with these points in the future, through further studies, necessary measures and informed debates.

*Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark  
Director, The Åland Islands Peace Institute*

## Abstract

This study, carried out during the summer of 2007 by the Åland Peace Institute, investigates the integration of non-Nordic migrants in the Archipelago of Åland, an autonomous, Swedish-speaking region on Finland's southwestern border. We use a survey to investigate the ways in which the Ålandic integration situation is similar to and diverges from the picture offered by Finland overall. The survey covered most immigrant groups in the Ålandic capital of Mariehamn equally, with the notable exception of Asians and the unemployed, two categories which we believe require further investigation.

We find that immigrants face similar barriers to labor market integration as they do on mainland Finland. We document a high level of reported first-gate rejection for migrants, a problem faced in particular by Middle Eastern and ex-Soviet migrants. These two groups are also the main victims of "degree inflation", their educational credentials being discounted by disbelieving employers. Overall we find evidence of an ethnic hierarchy on Åland similar to the one found on mainland Finland. Although we find significant differences in the level of reported friendships with native Ålanders. This variable is not correlated with professional success, a fact which we explain through the specific conditions of Ålandic society.

Our results by-and-large confirm ÅSUB's findings regarding discrimination, non-Nordic migrants being more likely to be discriminated on the islands, levels of discrimination being correlated with the ethnic hierarchy discussed above. Migrants to Åland are moderately satisfied with government action, while a sizeable proportion of them are not fully aware of their social security entitlements. Our respondents hold Ålandic schools in high regard, but it is unclear in what ways their opinions are related to the schools' pursuing multicultural policies.

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Bogdan State is a student at Amherst College in the United States, and at the London School of Economics. His research interests include migration, race and colonialism.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In the new millennium, migration and the cultural *mélange* it produces have become constants, if not clichés, of world cities. The global flows of population have expanded well beyond the great metropolises of the world, however. In Europe, a continent that has been for centuries at war with itself in the attempt to establish clear-cut borders between homogeneous nations, even the smallest towns nowadays encompass significant migrant communities.

One can understand the reality of globalization even in Mariehamn, a small town of eleven thousand in the Baltic Sea archipelago of Åland, and the subject of this study. In addition to the ubiquitous, international groups of tourists which ferries from Sweden and mainland Finland bring every day to the islands, Mariehamn has its own migrant community, coming from fifty-four different countries (ÅSUB, 2007a).

Such observations make Mariehamn no different from countless other communities influenced by global population flows in Europe and elsewhere. What makes this community particularly interesting, though, is its distinct status. Mariehamn is the capital of Åland, a self-governing territory under Finnish sovereignty. Its inhabitants are mainly Swedish-speaking, in a country where over 90% of inhabitants speak Finnish as their native language. The islands' economy likewise makes Åland stand out: in the high-unemployment Nordic region, the Åland labor market is so tight that unemployment has currently reached 2%.<sup>2</sup> Add to these circumstances a local parliament and government with decision power over many matters of crucial importance for integration policies and the Åland islands seem like a perfect candidate for a community that can accommodate migration successfully, in a Nordic region that has not been free of tensions, of which one need only recall the *Jyllands Posten* scandal in Denmark or, more

generally, the residential and labor-market segregation present all across Western Europe.

We are writing this paper with the persuasion that Åland has the economic, social and political potential to become a model for immigrant integration which other Nordic communities could follow. Even though we believe in the potential of Åland for successful immigrant integration, we do not assume this to automatically be the case, especially given that the Åland Islands do not have at the present time a coherent integration policy: this is why we have set out to provide an evaluation of the current situation of migrants in the islands. In our attempt to do so, we decided to undertake a survey study of the migrants themselves, as we felt it to be the essential starting point for any more in-depth inquiry into the problems of migrants to this small island community.

Our study is meant as an initial exploration of the issues migrants on Åland face, and does not claim to be exhaustive. Our inquiry was informed in particular by migration literature about Finland, literature which normally makes little mention or outright excludes the islands, considered too small, too marginal or too different to merit attention. We seek in our study to put our findings in dialogue with the commonly-accepted hypotheses about migration in Finland, and see to what extent Åland conforms to or contradicts what has been empirically observed in other parts of the country. Our paper begins with a little background on migrations from and to Åland (Chapter 2), followed by a discussion of attitudes toward migrants on the islands in Chapter 3. After a discussion of methodology (Chapter 4) we then proceed to examine our survey's findings regarding integration in the fifth part of this paper, after which we look at discrimination against migrants (Chapter 6) and at government action (Chapter 7); final remarks conclude our paper in Chapter 8.

## 2. The Migration Situation of Åland

Estimating the numbers of first- and second-generation migrants is not necessarily a straightforward undertaking. Comparing the numbers of the foreign-born (2,915), foreign citizens (724) and of those whose mother tongue was different from Finnish and Swedish (887), who were living on Åland at the end of 2006, reveals a staggering discrepancy (ÅSUB, 2007).

An in-depth examination of the migration history of Finland in general and of Åland in particular is thus required, to shed light upon the differences we encountered in the aforementioned figures. Despite their low population and relatively small size, the Åland Islands have an extensive migration history, upon which undoubtedly the archipelago's strategic location at the fault line between empires and nation states has left its mark. The islands still bear traces of nineteenth-century immigration coming from the Tsarist Empire in the various cemeteries spread around the ruins of the naval fortress of Bomarsund. Like much of the then-poor Nordic Region, Åland was also the starting point of many turn-of-the-century journeys to the New World.<sup>3</sup>

Later in the Twentieth Century, after the League of Nations settled the islands' status in the 1920s, Åland's migration history became inevitably tied to that of the Finnish nation-state. As nearly every piece on migration in Finland mentions, Finland emerged after World War II as a country of emigration, many of its citizens going abroad, especially to Sweden and to other Nordic countries, in search of higher wages. The mid-1970s marked a reversal of this trend, with emigration coming to a halt while many Finnish migrants came back during the next decades, oftentimes with foreign-born children or spouses who also came to hold Finnish citizenship. This

migratory cycle had a particularly large magnitude, proportionally speaking, in the Åland Islands, a territory isolated from the mainlands which was nonetheless closer geographically and linguistically to Sweden than to Finland: the Ålanders' back-and-forth migration between the archipelago and Sweden (and other Nordic countries) thus explains to a large degree the difference in numbers between the foreign-born and foreign citizens on Åland.<sup>4</sup>

Also in the 1970s, Finland started accepting the first significant groups of refugees, a category to which belong the respondents in our sample with the longest residency on Åland, having arrived on the islands as refugees from the Iranian Islamic Revolution. In addition to a trickle of refugees allowed in by the restrictive policy Finland had up to its EU accession, the late 1980s and early '90s also witnessed the arrival of economic migrants into a robustly growing country. The collapse of the Soviet Union and of the privileged trade relationships Finland had with this country set off in the year 1992 the worst recession for Finland in a century. The slump dragged on well into the second half of the decade and hit migrants particularly hard, among certain immigrant groups unemployment skyrocketing to levels beyond belief: 70, 80 or even 90% (Valtonen, 1999: 21). By the end of the decade, Finland had emerged from the recession, however, once more becoming an attractive destination for economic migrants.

With high wage differentials compared to Finland, geographical proximity and a visa-free travel regime for most of its countries, Eastern Europe – the Baltic Countries and Russia in particular – continuously improved its status as the most important region of origin for migrants to Finland. A right-of-return law for ethnic Finns living in Russia or their descendants particularly facilitated migration from Finland's easterly neighbor. Due to the linguistic similarities between their native language and Finnish,

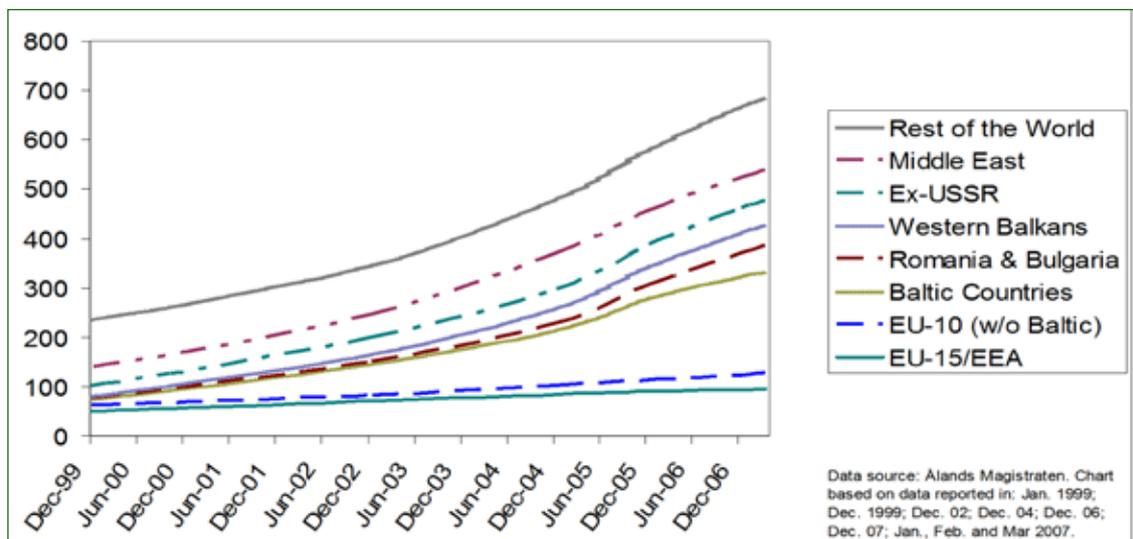
Estonians were another group who has figured prominently in Finnish migration flows from the 1990s till now. The 2004 expansion of the European Union, together with the lack of transitional provisions limiting the new EU citizens' right to work in Finland marked an acceleration of migration flows to this Nordic country.

The expansion of Baltic migrant numbers is particularly significant in Åland. This development is doubtlessly tied to the geographic proximity of the Islands to the Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, as well as to the tight Ålandic labor market offering immigrants a considerable amount of low-skill jobs in the tourism industry and in agriculture.

In addition to the other EU-10 countries, the new EU member country Romania, has added to the numbers of migrants on Åland in a staggering rhythm: whereas as late as 2002 there were only 3 Romanian citizens registered as living in the islands, by March 2007 their number had reached 51, a 17-fold increase in only 5 years (albeit on a very small base). Counting the largest migrant groups of Åland according to citizenship, Romanians come in third, trailing only Estonians (93 persons) and Latvians (91 persons) (Magistraten, 2007).<sup>5</sup>

Our description of migrant flows excludes, however, the most numerous group of foreign citizens on Åland, namely the Swedish, who numbered 1,045 persons in March 2007 (Magistraten, 2007). As a border region between Finland and Sweden, Åland poses particular challenges to the definition of migrants. The islands receive migrants, both workers and retirees, from both the Swedish and the Finnish mainland, and to a lesser extent from other Nordic countries. In this border region distinctions come hard, but it is apparent that the experience of persons relocating from Sweden resembles more that of Finnish mainlanders coming to Åland and less the transition migrants from other regions of the world face. Our observation applies just as well to other Nordic migrants, whose cognate native languages should enable them to adapt quickly to the Swedish-speaking Åland, and whose name and appearance render them invisible as persons with a migration background. For these reasons we believe that although, technically speaking, most international migration to Åland has Nordic sources, they belong rather in a discussion of internal migration within the Nordic region as a whole, and not in an examination of global human flows to Åland.

*Figure 1. Foreign citizens (non-Nordic) on the Åland Islands 1999-2007*



### 3. Attitudes toward migrants in Finland and Åland

The few studies in the field agree that attitudes toward migrants look mixed in Finland as a whole. Ervasti (2004) found that Finns' attitudes "at the most general level" are the harshest in the Nordic Region, and that only a few Southern and Central European countries held comparatively more negative attitudes toward immigrants, although hostility toward migrants is lower when it comes to more concrete questions, such as perceptions of migrants as posing an "economic and cultural threat" to natives.

Jaakkola found in a widely cited study (2000: 146) that "a high 36%" of rural Finnish men between 15 and 29 years old supported skinhead activity against immigrants. Negative attitudes against foreigners also hold in cities outside of the Helsinki metropolitan area, where 8% of the population expressed support for skinhead activity, compared to 4% in Helsinki (Jaakkola, 2000: 147). The most recent picture is not entirely bleak however, "a positive development in attitudes [having] spread throughout the entire society" (Jaakkola, 2005: xi) in the last few years.

While the Islands' rurality does make for a negative bias on attitudes, Åland's socio-historical context most likely predisposes natives to look more favorably towards migrants than the mainlanders do. Ålanders are part of the larger Swedish-speaking linguistic minority of Finland, whose members Pitkänen and Kouki (2002: 110) found to be more favorable towards migrants than the Finnish-speaking majority, in his study of public functionaries in Finland. In addition, Åland itself is an important destination of internal migration from and to the Finnish and Swedish mainlands, where the Ålandic government actively seeks workers.<sup>6</sup>

Finland's economic recovery after the 1990s recession has undoubtedly influenced the popu-

lation's attitudes towards migrants, after the low-point reached in 1993 (Jaakkola, 2005: ix). As the Åland Islands have a robust economy with very little unemployment, there is thus cause to expect more favorable attitudes toward migrants. Ervasti (2004: 36) cautions us against such an interpretation, however, finding in a comparative study of European countries' attitudes towards migrants, that, in Finland, "the proportion of those worrying that immigrants take jobs away, does not correlate with the actual level of unemployment", and that, in any case, the perceived economic threat posed by migrants has very low levels in Finland overall.

Didactical examinations of prejudice divide its sources according to two explanations: the conflict hypothesis stipulating that prejudice arises as a consequence of competition over economic or cultural resources, and the contact hypothesis which states that increased contact with immigrants decreases prejudice in the native population. The conflict hypothesis seems weakest in Finland: not only is the level of perceived socio-economic threat low compared to other countries, but Finns are most negative towards the groups that have the highest unemployment (overwhelmingly refugees): these groups are the least likely to pose an economic threat to the natives' well being, and if the conflict hypothesis were to hold then the most prejudice would be directed not at Somalians and Iranians, but at "Ingrian Finns and Nordic people", whose unemployment rates are close to the national average (Jaakkola, 2000, 138-9; see also Söderling, 1997). The perceived cultural threat migrants allegedly pose is even less of an issue in Finland, with only between one fifth and one fourth of the population harboring such concerns regarding migration. (Ervasti, 2004:36; Jaakkola, 2005:xi)

Even though direct competition on the labor market does not appear relevant in determining native-born Finns' attitudes toward migrants, the overall perceived risks of losing social status,

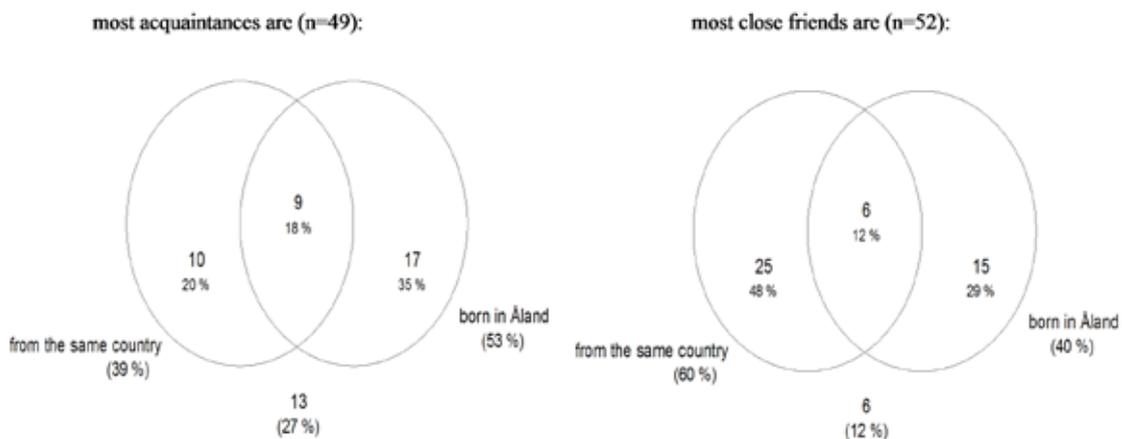
due to economic recession, or one's own marginal position in the labor market are significant determinants of prejudice. As mentioned above, Finns held the harshest opinions of migrants during the 1990s recession. Those in inherently weak categories on the labor market, senior citizens and the unemployed had worse than average views of foreigners in Finland. (Jaakkola, 2005: xii). Also, several studies (Ervasti, 2004: 43; Jaakkola, 2000: 147-9; Jaakkola, 2005: xii) have found education to be the best predictor of attitudes toward migrants: the higher educated the subject, the more likely he or she is to hold a good opinion of immigrants in Finland.

Kinnunen (2005: 32) notes that while the educational level of Ålanders is "somewhat lower" than in Finland as a whole, migrants coming from mainland Finland have a higher level of education than the Finnish average. In absence of a study of Ålanders' attitudes toward (international) migrants, we do not currently know to what extent these differences in education influence the level of prejudice toward this group. As the specific circumstances of Åland bring both positive and negative biases, we believe it safe, albeit not foolproof, to assume a moderate level

of prejudice toward migrants on the Åland Islands, roughly similar to Finland as a whole. Our results seem to confirm such an assumption: the average evaluation of the question "Native Ålanders have a good opinion of immigrants", on a scale of 1 (certainly not) to 10 (absolutely yes) has been 4.7, with most values grouped around the average.<sup>7</sup>

The contact hypothesis is particularly relevant to Finland and to the Åland Islands. Magdalena Jaakkola (2000: 153) found, for instance, that the natives' lack of contact with migrants heightened the original population's sense of migrant competition for economic resources. Furthermore, Ervasti (2004: 38) identifies "personally knowing migrants [as] the best predictor of attitudes toward receiving immigrants" in Finland. Jaakkola (2000: 150-1) also found contact with immigrants to be a "statistically...very significant" variable directly correlated with positive views of immigrants already in Finland throughout the years 1987-1999, her conclusion being also validated in a 2005 follow-up (xiii). In their study of officials' views regarding migrants and migration, Pitkänen and Kouki (2002: 109) found both the "quantity and quality" of contacts with migrants

*Figure 2. Acquaintances and close friends among migrants to the Åland Islands (venn Diagrams)*



Each circle represents the total number of respondents who chose each variant. The overlapping region in the middle of each diagram accounts for those that selected both answers. Numbers at bottom of each graph indicate those who chose neither answer.

to determine attitudes. Similarly, Liebkind and Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000, qtd. in Pitkänen & Kouki) found that only the more profound contacts mitigated prejudice against migrants, while superficial, acquaintanceship contacts did little in the way of reducing negative views.

While there is yet no study of native Ålanders' social networks, it is instructive to note that 40% of our respondents reported most of their close friends to be native Ålanders, while most of the acquaintances of 53% of those who answered our survey were born in the Islands (see Figure 2 above). Leaving the consequences stemming from friendship and acquaintanceship ties for the immigrants themselves to the next chapters, we may assume that there is a moderate degree of social segregation between natives and Ålanders, and that many natives do not have the kind of meaningful contact with migrants that could foster positive attitudes toward newcomers. Supporting our assumption is our respondents' evaluation of the statement "Most of Åland's non-Nordic migrants live in a separate society from the native population", which registered a mean score of 4.88.<sup>8</sup> Beyond our hypothesis of moderate segregation we cannot venture into claims-making, as the social networks of Ålanders lie beyond the scope of our study.

#### 4. Methodology

As the migrant population of Åland is small in absolute numbers, we set out in our study to reach all working-age migrants who were living or working in Mariehamn during the months of July and August 2007. Because of the privacy provisions of Finnish law, we were unable to access a comprehensive list of all migrants residing in Mariehamn, and we thus had to restrict ourselves to phone-book and "mailbox"<sup>9</sup> sampling. The names of Ålanders be-

ing fairly homogeneous,<sup>10</sup> we were able to pick out likely migrants fairly easily through the afore-mentioned methods. The only exception here is the case of Nordic (especially Swedish) migrants and Germans, all of whom had names which we had trouble telling apart from the native population's.

The similarity of names underscores the issue of "invisibility" in the case of Northern European migrants in Finland; because this migrant group is much more easily accepted than any other, they are the least likely to have difficulties integrating, rendering their situation of marginal relevance in our investigation of problem areas. To make our sampling even more inclusive of non-Northern European migrants, we also distributed surveys in the few ethnic and immigrant businesses of Mariehamn.

The capital of Åland provided a large concentration of migrants on a relatively small surface, these characteristics making it the best suited area for our research. Restricting our study to Mariehamn, while necessary for the sake of efficiency, also means that our findings should be viewed with some circumspection when extrapolated to the whole of Åland. We were able through our methods to include in our sample 186 migrants living in Mariehamn.<sup>11</sup>

Assessing the real number of migrants in Mariehamn is not a straight-forward task, as only statistics on the number of foreign citizens are available at the municipal level: according to Statistics Finland there were 406 foreign citizens living in Mariehamn in March 2007. In addition, some refugees living in Mariehamn have given up their citizenship, thus rendering them "invisible" in the afore-mentioned statistic. From the age distributions according to nationality for the whole of Åland it follows that among the foreign citizens, around 70 are children under 14. We can thus state that our sample included somewhere between one half and two thirds of the working-age migrants living in Mariehamn.

In addition to our sample, our survey undoubtedly reached more persons through the migrants' own social networks. Our survey was however unable to directly reach the least integrated migrants, those who had no telephone subscription, no stable housing arrangement and who did not work in an ethnic business: this shortcoming introduces an upward bias on our evaluation of integration.

To determine the issues immigrants on Åland are confronting, we created a six-page survey, which was mailed to migrants together with instructions and a return envelope. The survey and instructions were provided to all migrants in Swedish and English; we also sent out mailings in Farsi, Russian and Romanian to those immigrants who we had reason to believe would know these languages. We sent the survey in duplicate and asked our recipients to distribute it to their migrant friends and family: we thus received a number of surveys from migrants who were not included in our initial sample.

To improve our response rate, we sent telephonic and mail reminders to non-responders;<sup>12</sup> we also explicitly made divulging one's name optional to reduce our survey's intrusiveness. Nonetheless, our response rate was a few percentage points above 25%. We can attribute this result to a general reluctance to respond to surveys in Åland,<sup>13</sup> as well as to our survey having been carried out during the summer months, when many native Ålanders and migrants alike leave for their holidays. Nonetheless, we have reason to believe our sample to provide a balanced cross-section of most of Mariehamn's immigrant groups, as is revealed by Table 1.

All groups have a similar representation rate among our respondents as they do among the foreign citizenry of Mariehamn, with the notable exceptions of the citizens of Asian, Middle Eastern and Western European countries. As mentioned before, "invisibility" most likely accounts for the under-representation of the latter group, while the specific circumstances of ref-

*Table 1.*  
*National origin among foreign citizens living in Mariehamn, sampled persons and respondents.*

Region	A Total foreign (not Swedish citizens living in Mariehamn, March 2007.		B Sample – imputed origin		C Responses by origin	
	#	% total	#	% total	#	% total
Africa	5	1,23%	3	1,58%	0	0,00%
Asia	37	9,11%	3	1,58%	1	1,80%
Baltic Countries	72	17,73%	10	5,26%	9	16,40%
Eastern Europe	89	21,92%	49	25,79%	16	29,10%
M.East & N.Af.	65	16,01%	78	41,05%	19	32,70%
Former USSR	33	8,13%	16	8,42%	6	10,90%
South America	4	0,99%	2	1,05%	0	0,00%
W. Europe	79	19,46%	16	8,42%	2	3,60%
Other/Unknown	22	5,42%	13	6,84%	3	5,50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Sources: Column A – Statistics Finland listings provided by the Åland Register Office.

ugee status and the more established nature of their communities explains the over-representation of Middle Easterners.<sup>14</sup> Oddly enough, our sampling methods yielded only one Asian household that our study was able to reach, and we received only one answer from this group. It seems thus plausible that Asians might have a more marginal status among Åland's migrants, this group's predicament requiring particular attention in the future. Another possibility that does not exclude the previous explanation could be that many Asian women are married to Swedish- or Finnish- speakers, their last names acquired by marriage excluding them from our sample.<sup>15</sup> Eastern Europeans registered a slight boost in the response rate, most likely because of the survey being available in Romanian, the Russian-language version of the survey having done the same to the response rate for the Baltic countries and the remaining ex-Soviet space.

## 5. Immigrant Integration on Åland

**A**mong the first substantive questions we asked our respondents was whether they thought the community in which they were living was integrated. On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (certainly), the median score was 6.23.<sup>16</sup> When asked to provide a subjective assessment, most of our respondents' views were moderate, with a tendency to describe Mariehamn and/or Åland as integrated rather than not. The means were more or less the same for economic migrants and those who left their home country for other reasons, while refugees had a slightly better evaluation of integration.<sup>17</sup>

While it seems that migrants living or working in Mariehamn had a marginally positive perception of integration in their community, such a subjective assessment can only provide a rough starting point for our inquiry into the realm of

the objective facts of immigrant integration on Åland.

Our explicit question about integration on Åland confused many of our respondents to the point of refusing to evaluate such a broad concept without being provided with a definition. Their reasons for confusion<sup>18</sup> was, we believe, justified, inasmuch as there is no textbook definition that could describe the exact circumstances under which an immigrant can be considered "integrated" in their community. When discussed in specialty literature, the meaning of integration is usually clarified through the term's properties: reviewing the theoretical scholarship in the field, van Tubergen (2006: 7) makes the distinction between socio-cultural and economic integration. According to him,

Immigrants are said to be more socially and culturally integrated in the host country when, for example, interethnic contacts, friendships, and marriages are common, and when immigrants speak the destination language well [while] it is assumed that the economic integration of immigrants is stronger, when they have higher participation rates, lower unemployment rates, better jobs and a higher income (2006: 7)

Weiner (1996: 7) identifies three main factors that determine immigrant integration: "the willingness of the society to absorb the immigrants, the commitment of the immigrants to their new society, and the structure of the labor market."

The host society thus has a prominent role in immigrant integration. While immigrants themselves play a very proactive role in both types of integration discussed above, the burden of integration can not fall only on newcomers, who oftentimes encounter legal and attitudinal barriers to their becoming fully-fledged members of the community. If, of course, such an outcome is desired, state and local authorities need to eliminate these hindrances, or at least see that their

effects are sufficiently mitigated to permit integration. To what extent barriers exist on Åland we will examine in the next pages, after which we will describe the actual immigrant integration picture of Åland, in regards to economic and social integration.

### *5 a. Economic Integration*

Breaking the barriers that prevent them from competing on the labor market is the largest problem migrants in Finland face. There are several studies documenting labor market segregation in Finland. Certain immigrant groups – non-Westerners, non-Europeans, refugees – have registered unemployment rates several times higher than the Finnish average (Heikkilä & Järvinen, 2003: 10; Ylänkö, 2000: 189), a phenomenon which has been observed since the early 1990s. While the situation was worst during the recession, the native and immigrant unemployment rates having converged to a certain extent during the subsequent growth period, the discrepancies remain staggering, even more so if we account for the fact that Western migrants, who are factored in the calculation of immigrant unemployment, have unemployment rates comparable to the native population's (Heikkilä & Järvinen, 2003: 10-11).

Even if they do get work, the most disadvantaged groups get the worst jobs, unskilled or low-skill positions which pay little and have a temporary status. In a study of the “labor market careers” of migrants to Finland, Forsander (2003: 65) found “origin, level of education, and national origin of education” to be the best predictors of marginality in the Finnish labor market.

We received no answers from migrants to Åland who were unemployed.<sup>19</sup> We might conclude thus that the migrant unemployment rate on Åland is close enough to the general 2% to fall under the relatively high margin of error of our 55-person sample. This is not necessarily the case. As Lars-Erik Karlsson, head of the Åland

employment bureau, notes, the perceived abundance of jobs makes employers think the unemployed simply do not have the skills necessary to perform in the workplace. In the small-town environment of Mariehamn, the unemployed regard it dangerous to risk making their identities known, for penalty of being completely shut out of the local labor market (Karlsson, 2007).

The local circumstances lead us to believe that there is a good likelihood that there are unemployed migrants in Åland, and probably more than in the general population, and that in spite of our best assurances we were not able to convince them to answer our mail-in survey. Unemployed migrants are an inherently at-risk group, especially those who go without a job for a long time: it is thus of utmost importance for future inquiries to investigate this group in particular.

The economic context of Finland, as well as the social structures enforced by the welfare state, and the population's attitudes toward foreigners work together in maintaining the labor market status quo. Bartram (2007) points out that the Finnish government together with the trade unions have constrained during the last decades the possibilities Finnish employers had of importing low-skilled foreign labor, thus coaxing industries to adopt labor-saving new technologies, as well as to upgrade their human capital stock. A side-effect of this policy is that migrants as a group have few jobs available to them, because most positions require extensive qualifications, which are not always easy to translate from one country to another and a high degree of linguistic competency, which the immigrants lack or at least are assumed to do so.

Forsander (2002: 82) cites the effects of the “Nordic welfare state”, which, by demanding, in name of its all-inclusiveness “both cultural and social homogeneity as a condition for full membership in society”, effectively relegates those who are culturally different to the margins of society. Moreover, while the universally-available

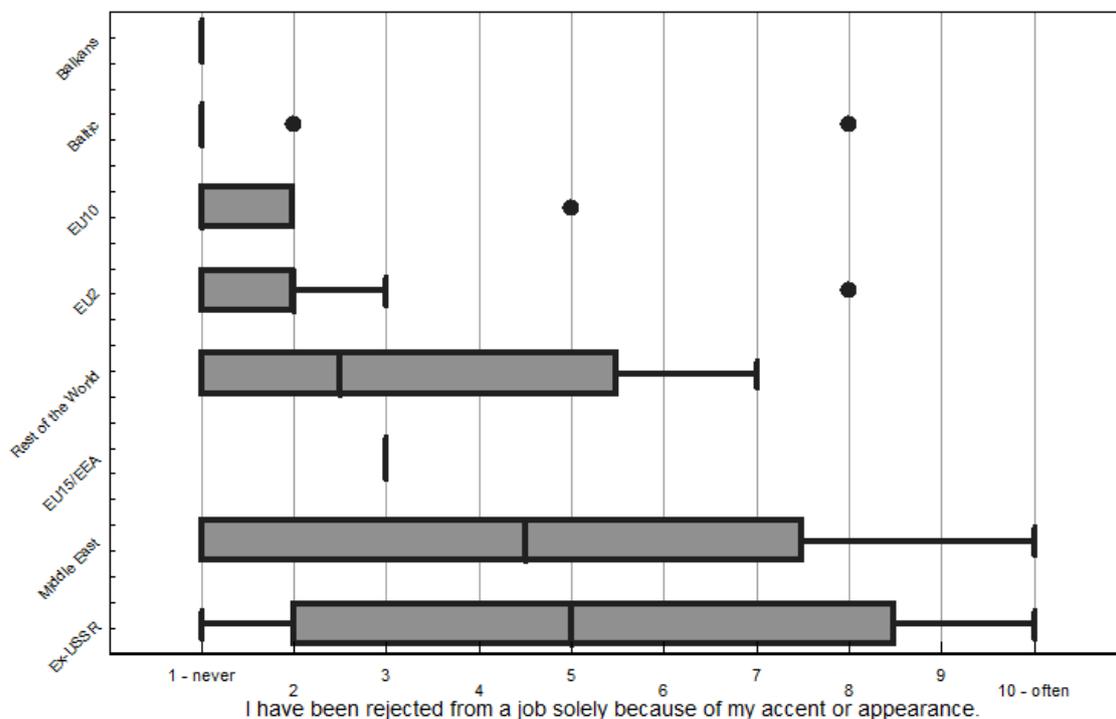
social security allows “a subsistence minimum”, it also raises barriers to participation in the labor market, i.e. the higher costs of labor make employers less willing to risk hiring migrants. Furthermore, according to Jaakkola (2000: 141-2), views of migrants in the Finnish labor market are structured along an ethnic hierarchy parallel to international (mis-)perceptions.

On the labor market the ethnic hierarchy is especially poignant in two discriminatory practices – first-gate rejection and “degree inflation”. Many refugees whose physical features and/or accent particularly set them apart from the general population have reported being rejected from a job solely based on assumptions that their education and Finnish competency could not possibly meet the requirements (Valtonen, 2001: 430; 1999: 24-5). According to Paananen (1999, qtd. by Valtonen, 2001 and by Ylänkö, 2000), the importance put on Finnish language

ability in even the lowest-skilled jobs is indicative of the weight of perceived “Finnishness” in employment decisions, making the labor market not exactly welcoming of immigrants.

First gate rejection is a problem on Åland as well. Only 51% percent of those who rated the sentence “I have been rejected from a job solely because of my accent or appearance” gave it the minimum value (1 – Never). Controlling for ethnicity reveals an ethnic hierarchy similar to that reported in Finland in general, with migrants from the Soviet Union and the Middle East most vulnerable to this kind of discrimination, while those from Romania (EU2) consistently report a few occurrences of this phenomenon. It may appear surprising that migrants from the old European Union report first-gate rejection, while those from the Balkans in our sample do not do so – if, that is, we do not take into account the extremely small numbers of these two

Figure 3. Reported first-gate rejections by region of origin (box-and-whisker-plot)



1=never, 10=often; average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges = 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values; isolated dots = outside values.

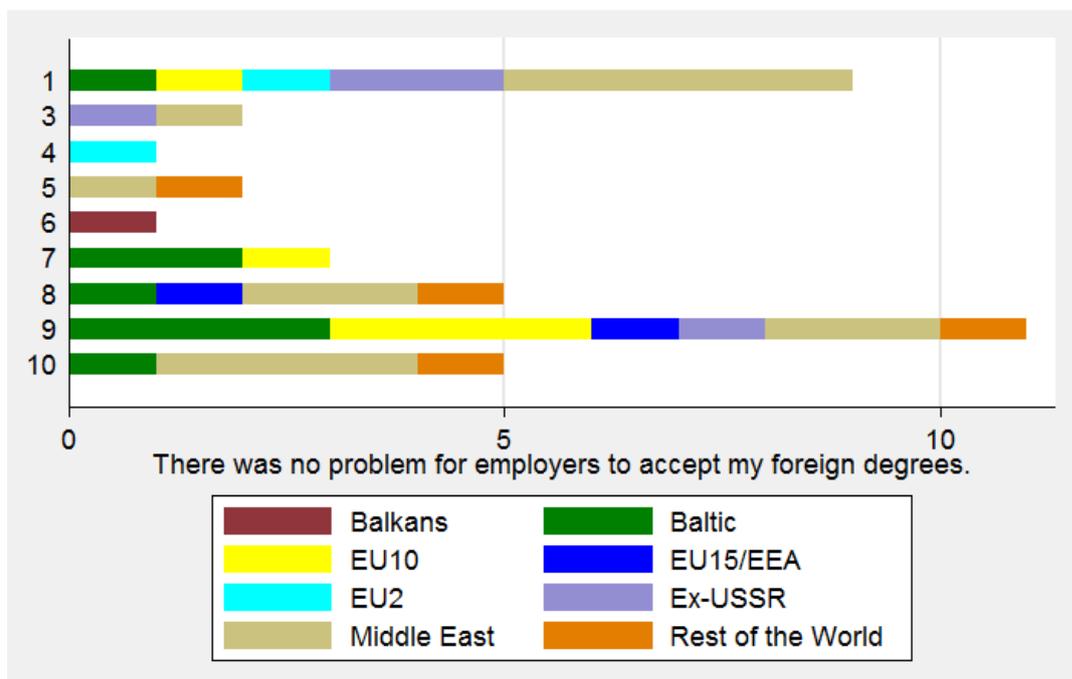
groups, of which only two, and respectively one respondents have rated the statement.

Annika Forsander (2003: 66-8) notes that there is a widespread tendency among employers to “rank” educational credentials according to the place in the ethnic hierarchy of their nation of origin: while employers value Finnish degrees most, they look with far more disbelief at degrees from countries they regard as “unimportant”. This situation affects migrants with degrees from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in particular. Although education was a significant predictor for the a good labor market situation for migrants with Western credentials, this factor’s correlation with the “stable labor market career” Forsander investigated was not significant for migrants from former Eastern Bloc countries. As Figure 4 shows, a number of our respondents also reported having encountered problems getting credit for their foreign

credentials on the Ålandic labor market. While, unlike in Forsander’s study, proportionally few migrants from the larger “EU10” region (including the Baltic states) have reported difficulties, it seems that a sizeable proportion of migrants coming from the Middle East and the Soviet Union have been frustrated in their efforts to get local employers to acknowledge their studies.

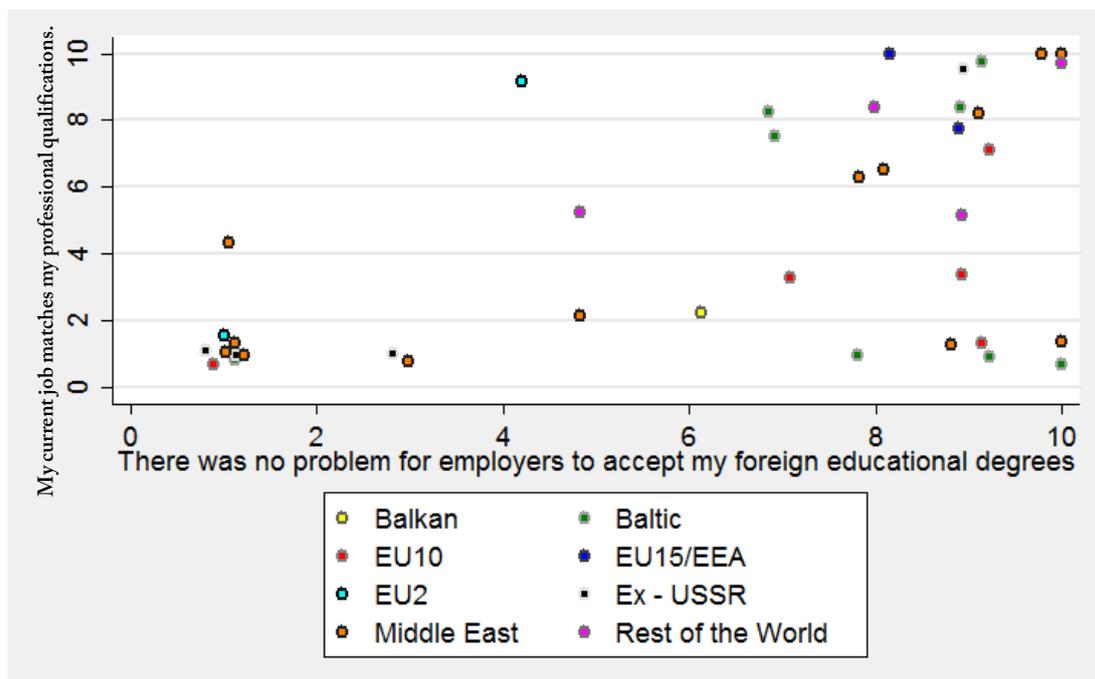
For most migrants having their foreign degree accepted on the Ålandic labor market seems to have been only a necessary though not sufficient requirement for obtaining a job commensurate with their professional qualifications. As Figure 4 reveals, except for two outliers, most pairs of ratings for the sentences “There was no problem for employers to accept my foreign educational degrees” and “My current job matches my professional qualification” are located either close to the graph’s first diagonal or below it: while for many immigrants, whose scores are located close

Figure 4. *Employers accepted foreign credentials, by ethnicity (stacked histogram)*



Answers from 1 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement).

Figure 5. *Job matches professional qualifications / Employers accepted foreign educational credentials (scatterplot)*



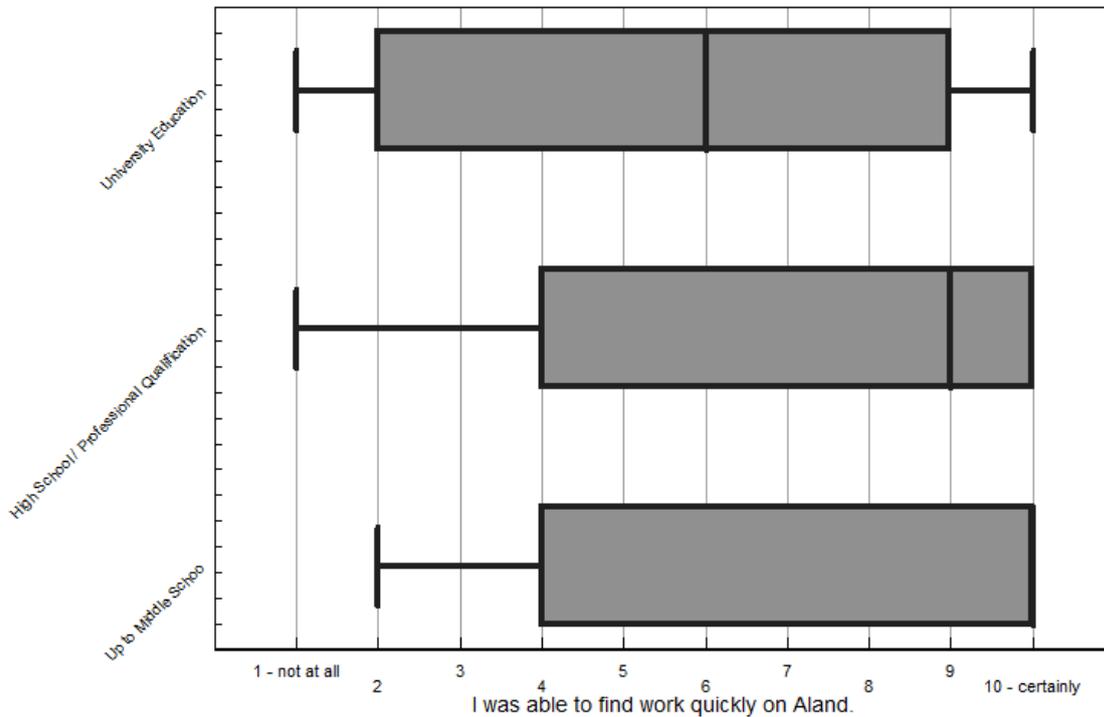
Answers from 1 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement).

to the diagonal, the possibility – or lack thereof – of employers acknowledging their degree has correlated with their finding a job matching their training, for many of our respondents, coming from the Middle East, the Baltic countries and the rest of Eastern Europe have found recognition of their degree to be insufficient for finding a suitable job to their education. In conclusion, it appears that while lack of degree recognition holds back many migrants on the Åland labor market, like the Middle Eastern, ex-Soviet and Eastern European respondents who gave the most negative answers on both questions (the pair 1-1 on the graph), even if employers do give credit to foreign degrees, they are still reluctant to hire migrants for higher-skilled jobs.

According to Valtonen (1999: 24), “very many resettling professionals are arriving at the conclusion that the door to equivalent employment is, with few exceptions, closed for them.” Al-

though Valtonen’s observations concern refugees, given the skepticism with which employers view most migrants’ credentials, it is plausible that the higher-educated migrants would spend more time before finding a job, in search for a position matching their skills; this was exactly the case with our respondents (Figure 6). While those with middle- and high-school education reported consistently that they could find work quickly on Åland, there was a marked difference in the university-educated migrants’ valuation of this statement. Jobs may be plentiful on the Åland Islands, but migrants to the archipelago seem to be confronting the same problems with credential recognition as foreigners settling on the mainland.

It appears, especially in light of the critical weight Paananen (1999) found employers to place on Finnishness in the labor market, that there is a “confidence threshold”, as Kathleen

*Figure 6. Possibilities of finding work quickly, by education (box-and-whisker plot)*

1=certainly not, 10=definitely, yes. Average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges = 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values.

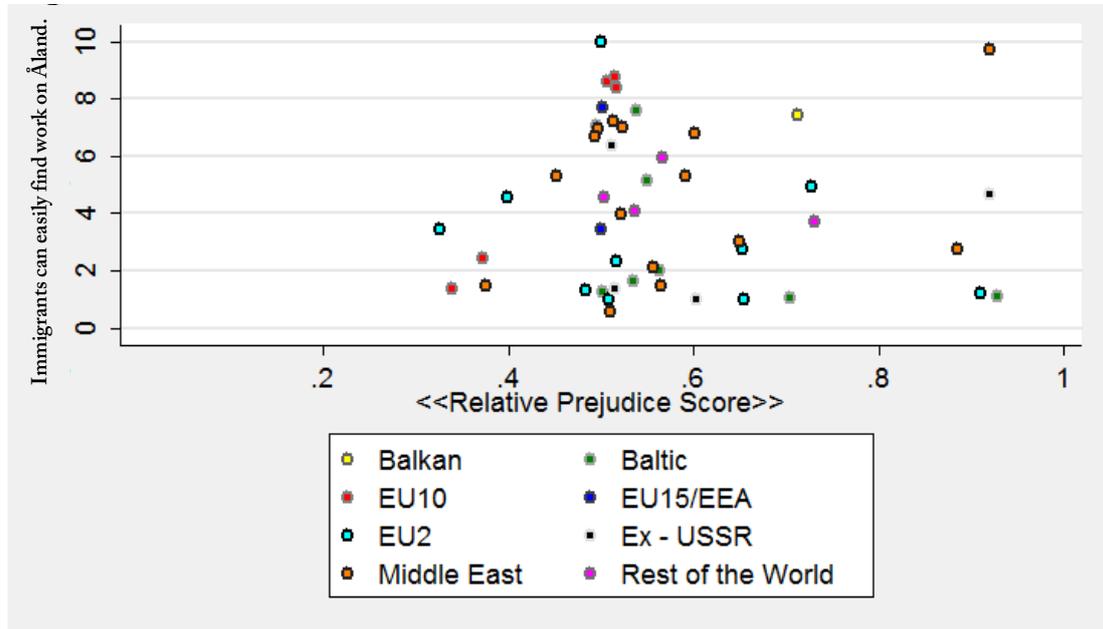
Valtonen (2001: 432-5) identified in the case of refugees, that most migrants must cross on their way to labor market integration. A manifestation of this “confidence gap”, akin to the process of degree inflation described earlier is the devaluation by Finnish employers of foreign work experience gained in countries with a low position in a perceived international hierarchy (Forsander, 2002: 96).

Such an explanation does not exclude, however, the possibility that employers would reject migrant job applicants for a bona fide reason, the lack of the language skills necessary for particular jobs, a situation which could render one unable to function in the workplace, regardless of education. In order to establish the extent of the “language gap” compared to the “trust gap” determining employment decisions regarding migrants, we have plotted the evaluations of three statements in Figure 6 above. On the y-axis we

plotted the scores our respondents gave to the statement “Immigrants can easily find work on Åland,” while on the x-axis we used a “Relative Employer Prejudice Score.” We calculated this index using two statements “Immigrants have a harder time finding work on Åland because they do not speak Swedish well enough”, and “Immigrants have a harder time finding work on Åland because of employer prejudice”, dividing the score of the latter through the sum of both variables and obtaining thus the relative share of employer prejudice our respondents assigned to reasons for the rejection of migrant job applicants.

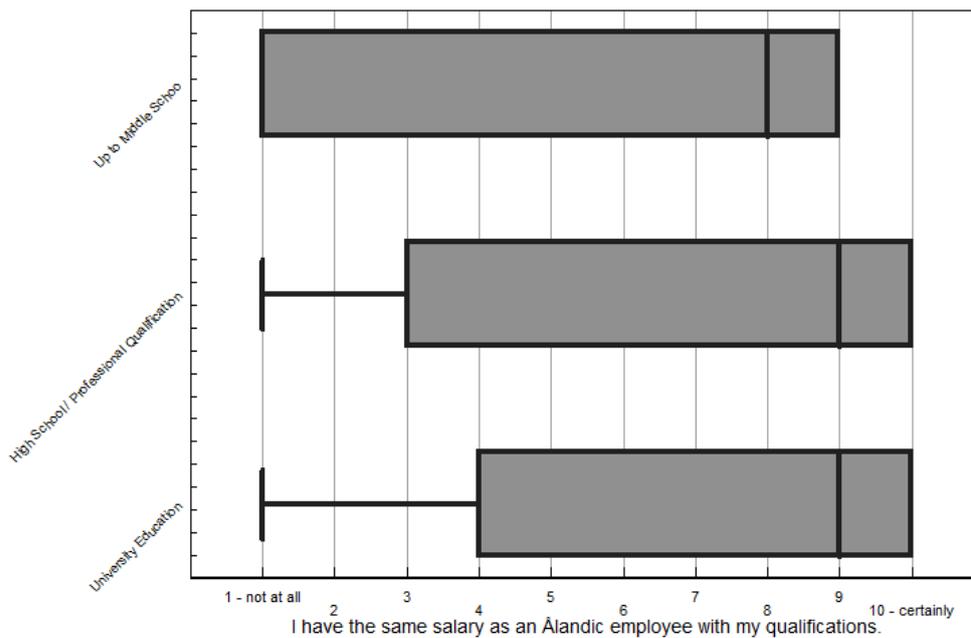
As is apparent from the plot, the index’s values are concentrated in the middle, most respondents having assigned about the same value to both poor language abilities and employer prejudice. The index has also a marginal, though statistically significant<sup>20</sup> skew towards the right side of the graph. In particular some of our re-

Figure 7. "Relative Employer Prejudice Score" by appreciation of difficulty for immigrants to find work on Åland (scatterplot).



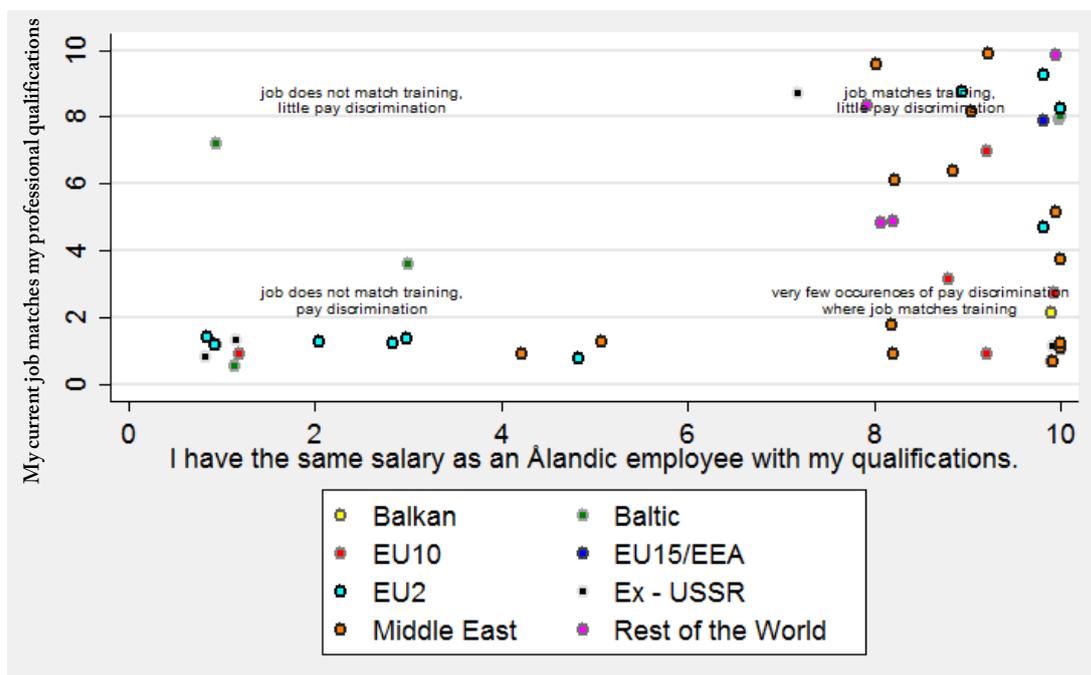
"Prejudice Score" = score of "immigrants have a harder time finding work on Åland because of employer prejudice" / ("immigrants have a harder time finding work on Åland because of employer prejudice" + "immigrants have a harder time finding work on Åland because they don't speak Swedish well enough")

Figure 8. Same salary as an Ålander, by education (box-and-whisker plot)



1=certainly not, 10=definitely, yes. Average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values.

Figure 9. Same salary as Ålander x Job matches qualifications (scatterplot)

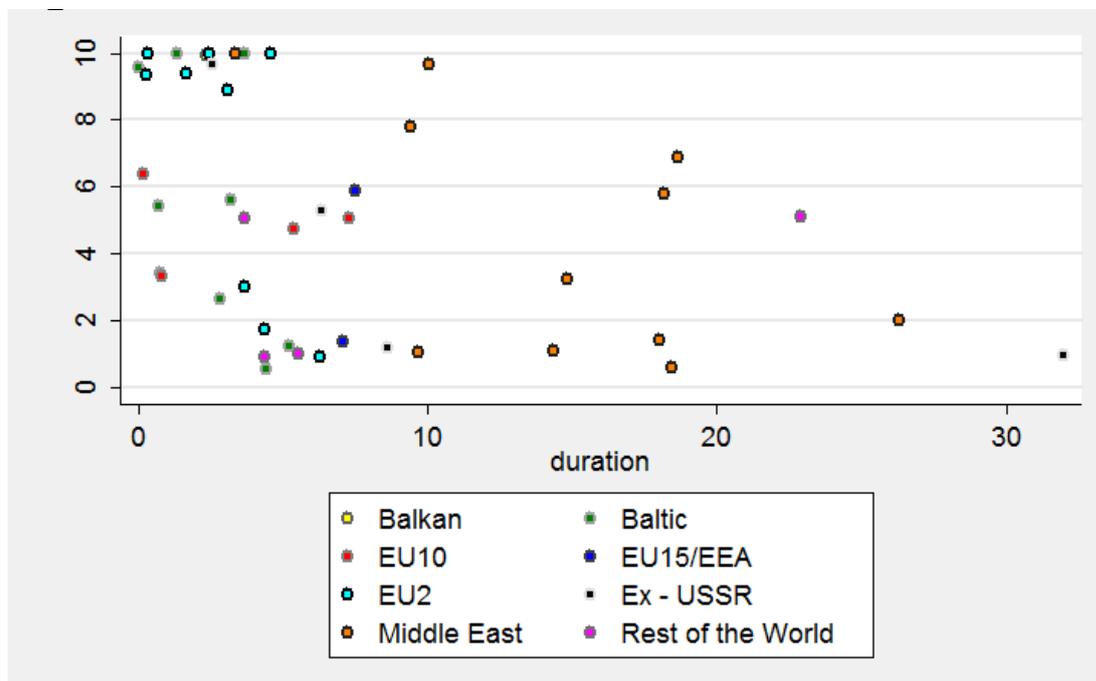


Answers from 1 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement).

spondents who rated jobs as hard to come by for migrants to the Islands have also identified employer prejudice as the more significant factor in job rejections than poor language skills. While finding a job corresponding to their qualification is a challenge in particular for the higher-educated migrants, our respondents have indicated a low level of pay discrimination in their workplace. As noticeable from the box-and-whiskers-plot in Figure 8, reported levels of discrimination decrease with education and tend to concentrate around the mean value. From the large density of points in the upper right-hand corner of Figure 9 and the virtual absence of pairs of values in the upper-left-hand region of the graph, which plots our subjects' perception of pay discrimination and of a job adequate to their training, we can observe that having a job matching the respondent's professional qualifications correlates very well with the lack of pay discrimination in the work place, although the

obverse is not true, as there are cases (in the lower-right-hand region) where there was little or no pay discrimination reported even though the job did not match the subject's qualifications. While not all unskilled jobs make distinctions between natives and migrants, some do so, and it seems very plausible that helping migrants make use of their education on the Åland labor market would be one of the best ways of dismantling the barriers that stand in the way of equality of opportunity between migrants and natives.

Forsander (2000: 15; 2002: 110-1) has documented the over-representation of migrants in a few sectors of the Finnish labor market, such as cleaning or the restaurant industry. This fact is not problematic in itself. Settling in a new country puts migrants, who have on average little location-specific knowledge and oftentimes only limited language skills, in an initially disadvantageous labor market position. For newcomers "migrant" jobs requiring little country-spe-

*Figure 10. Duration of stay on Åland x works together with other migrants (scatterplot)*

Answers from 1 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement).

cific competencies can provide a livelihood and an entry-level for the mainstream labor market. Unfortunately, for many migrants in Finland their initial, low-skilled jobs do not serve as mere way-stations toward full integration on the labor market, but oftentimes become long-term professional dead-ends (Forsander, 2002: 96). In this case the Åland Islands present a better situation than Finland as a whole. According to Figure 10, most migrants do not report working together mostly with other migrants, with one exception. Some of those who have been on the islands for only a few years have reported working together mostly with other immigrants, which is as previously mentioned not problematic in itself, although the fact that some of this latter group have been on Åland for as long as five years might give one reason for concern.

Encouraging migrant entrepreneurship is one of the solutions suggested for mitigating the

chronic unemployment besetting migrants to the Nordic countries. Although migrant entrepreneurs do exist in Finland, the circumstances of migration determine entrepreneurial success to the same extent to which they correlate with labor market integration. Joronen (2002: 141) found that refugee, re-migrant and marital-migrant<sup>21</sup> entrepreneurs were the least successful, lacking both the economic and social capital required to develop viable businesses. Mariehamn is an exception to the problems described by Joronen, most ethnic businesses in town being run by migrants who came to the islands as refugees, from the Middle East in particular. That most migrant-run businesses are restaurants is not surprising. Forsander (2002: 111) identified “ethnic resources”, i.e. a national or regional cuisine and contacts with co-ethnics in the country-of-origin, as facilitating the migrants’ access to the industry. While the situation is better than

on the mainland, it is unclear to what extent migrant entrepreneurs can venture beyond the traditional ethnic economic niches.

Our investigation of the situation of migrants on the Ålandic labor market reveals a better picture than the mainland. Many migrants were able to find jobs that provided them with enough opportunity for professional development, and usually credential acknowledgement by employers has not been a problem. Unfortunately there is an at-risk group of immigrants who have not managed to obtain recognition of their degrees. As employer acceptance of credentials was the best predictor for the absence of pay discrimination in the workplace, it is even more important to facilitate degree recognition on the labor market. The majority of migrants who have been on Åland for longer have managed to either bypass or move out of typically “migrant”, low-skill jobs, but there are serious question marks about the labor market status of those who have been on the islands for less than five years, many of whom have jobs offering little opportunity for professional advancement. Finally, migrant entrepreneurship on Åland offers an encouraging picture, although it requires further inquiry.

### *5.b. Social Integration*

According to Finnish migration literature, the number and quality of social contacts oftentimes underpin the economic integration (or lack thereof) of immigrants in their new society. In the field of entrepreneurship, Joronen (2002: 153-4) found that the most successful individuals had lived in Finland for a long time and had good, extensive networks in the country, while the least successful entrepreneurs had poor social networks. If in the case of entrepreneurship social contacts within one’s own group and with the native population are equally important, good contacts with the original population are particularly important for success on the labor market, as a Finn’s recommendation for a

migrant job applicant is oftentimes sufficient to overcome the “confidence gap” discussed in the labor market section of this article (Valtonen, 2001: 435). An examination of social networks is therefore necessary to investigate the integration of migrants on the Åland Islands.

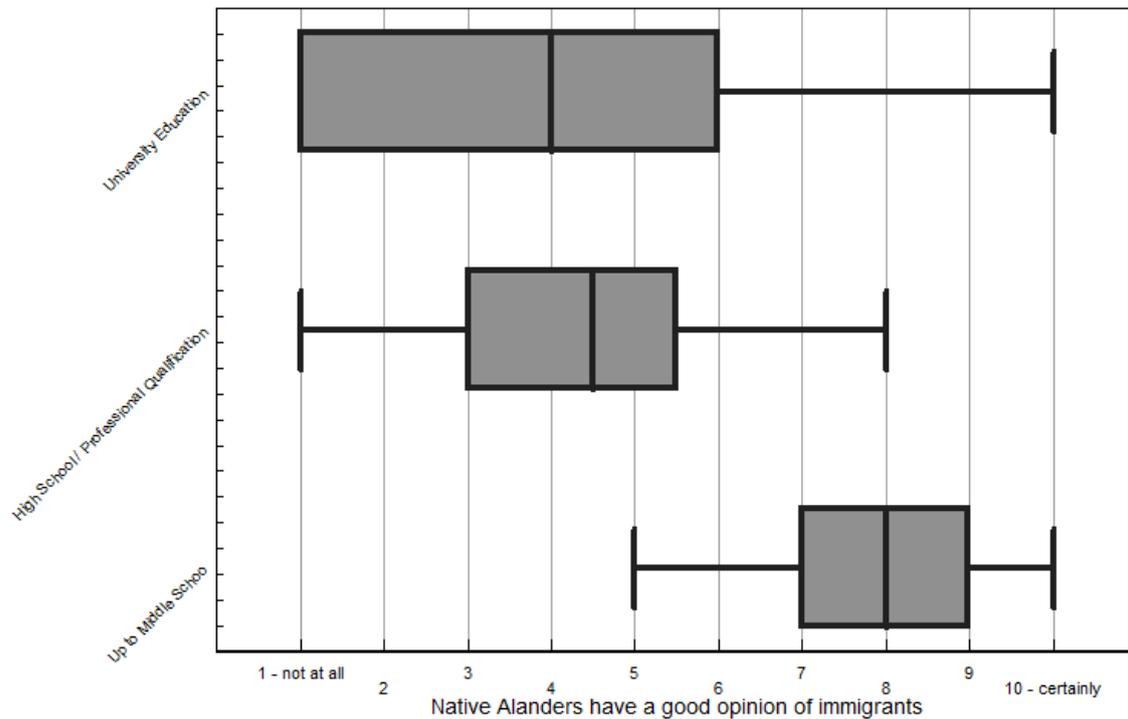
We asked our respondents to identify the groups to which they appreciated most of their close friends and acquaintances belonged to, provided nine different choices for each category, as listed in Table 2. A detailed examination of the responses we received leads us to a few interesting conclusions. Roughly two times as many respondents who had no university degree listed those born on Åland as making up most of their close friends as the university graduates who answered our surveys. This difference is likely statistically significant ( $p=87\%$  at the 95% confidence level) and is also reflected by the proportion of respondents with Swedish-speaking friends. University-educated migrants also tended to report having more friends from the same country.

As is evident from Figure 11, education was also a good predictor for our subjects’ appreciation of Ålander’s attitudes toward migrants, of which the higher-educated respondents having a worse perception than those with only basic schooling. A more in-depth, qualitative investigation would be necessary to establish the reasons for this disparity, but we can nonetheless posit an explanation related to the loss of social status that university-educated migrants often experience in new societies where their qualifications are not accepted at face value. We believe it possible that these migrants’ frustration have also heightened the alienation and displacement that come with migration, making them less likely to make local friends.

A common-sense assumption would have us believe that migrant’s reports of being friends mostly with Ålanders or not would correlate with professional success, as one would think

*Table 2. Friends and Acquaintances*

Question	Education			Selected Regions of Origin			Middle East
	Middle School, High-School or Prof. Qual.	University Education	Total	Baltic	EU2	Ex-USSR	
<i>Most friends...</i>							
...have the same ethnicity (as the respondent)	29,2%	34,8%	31,9%	33,3%	44,4%	19,7%	46,7%
...are from the same country	54,2%	65,2%	59,6%	77,8%	77,8%	66,7%	40,0%
...speak the same native language	54,2%	56,5%	55,3%	77,8%	55,6%	100,0%	33,3%
...are from the same part of the world	33,3%	21,7%	27,7%	33,3%	33,3%	33,3%	20,0%
...have the same religion	25,0%	34,8%	29,8%	44,4%	22,2%	50,0%	33,3%
...are born in Åland	<b>45,8%</b>	<b>26,1%</b>	36,2%	22,2%	11,1%	66,7%	60,0%
...are foreign	41,7%	21,7%	31,9%	11,1%	33,3%	50,0%	33,3%
...come from other European countries	41,7%	8,7%	25,5%	11,1%	22,2%	33,3%	26,7%
...speak Swedish	<b>54,2%</b>	<b>30,4%</b>	42,6%	11,1%	22,2%	83,3%	60,0%
N =	24	23	47	9	9	6	15
<i>Most acquaintances...</i>							
...have the same ethnicity (as the respondent)	17,4%	9,5%	13,6%	11,1%	12,5%	16,7%	35,7%
...are from the same country	34,8%	38,1%	36,4%	33,3%	37,5%	66,7%	50,0%
...speak the same native language	47,8%	33,3%	40,9%	33,3%	25,0%	100,0%	42,9%
...are from the same part of the world	39,1%	23,8%	31,8%	22,2%	25,0%	33,3%	28,6%
...have the same religion	13,0%	14,3%	13,6%	0,0%	12,5%	33,3%	21,4%
...are born in Åland	<b>52,2%</b>	<b>52,4%</b>	52,3%	66,7%	37,5%	66,7%	50,0%
...are foreign	47,8%	33,3%	40,9%	22,2%	62,5%	50,0%	50,0%
...come from other European countries	30,4%	38,1%	34,1%	66,7%	50,0%	33,3%	21,4%
...speak Swedish	<b>56,5%</b>	<b>66,7%</b>	61,4%	55,6%	37,5%	83,3%	78,6%
N =	23	21	44	9	8	6	14

*Figure 11. Appreciation of Ålanders' opinion of migrants, by education (scatterplot)*

1=certainly not, 2=definitely, yes. Average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges = 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values; isolated dots = outside values.

that more friendship ties with the local population would also translate into access to better jobs. This is not the case with our respondents, however: our data yields a negligible (0.0007) Pearson's correlation coefficient between our subject's valuation of the opportunities provided by their current job and their having mostly Ålandic friends. Although the small size of our sample cannot definitively exclude a statistical anomaly, we believe rather that this lack of correlation is tied to the nature of "social capital" itself and to the specificities of the Ålandic context.

The concept of social capital is essential to understanding the economic implications of social networks. Bourdieu (1985: 51) defined this notion as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition". It is important to note that it is not ma-

chines or even people that make up social capital, but relationships between people, and that social capital of one kind has limited transferability between uses (Coleman, 1988: S98). The characteristics of social capital make it hard for a "producer" of social capital to capture all its benefits, rendering this form of capital akin to public goods (Coleman, 1988: S116). Even though only some of our respondents were producers of social capital through their friendship ties with Ålanders, their friendship networks could thus have benefited other migrants in their network as well, i.e. those in our sample not reporting Ålandic friendships.

Granoveter (1973: 1372) emphasized the importance of short social paths (e.g. if A knows B, B knows C, A-B-C is such a path) between employer and prospective employee for word-of-mouth diffusion of information about open positions to be effective, else word-of-mouth be-

comes similar to a public announcement, meaning that the social network brings no “leg up” in the job search to those hearing about a work opportunity. Granoveter gives as effective only “the egocentric network made up of ego, his contacts [(friends and acquaintances)] and their contacts” (ibid.). Although in the case of large communities such networks account for large differences between individuals, we believe that the acquaintances of one’s acquaintances (to extend the afore-mentioned criterion farthest) would make up a significant part of the islands’ population for most people living there, native or otherwise. Thus, the Ålandic paradox: although the islands’ society is notoriously hard to “break into”, once a basic network is established with the local population, the professional benefits of denser connections to Ålanders appear to be marginal. It seems that labor-market social capital comes not in small units that differentiate between individuals in larger societies, but in one big chunk that is roughly similar for most.

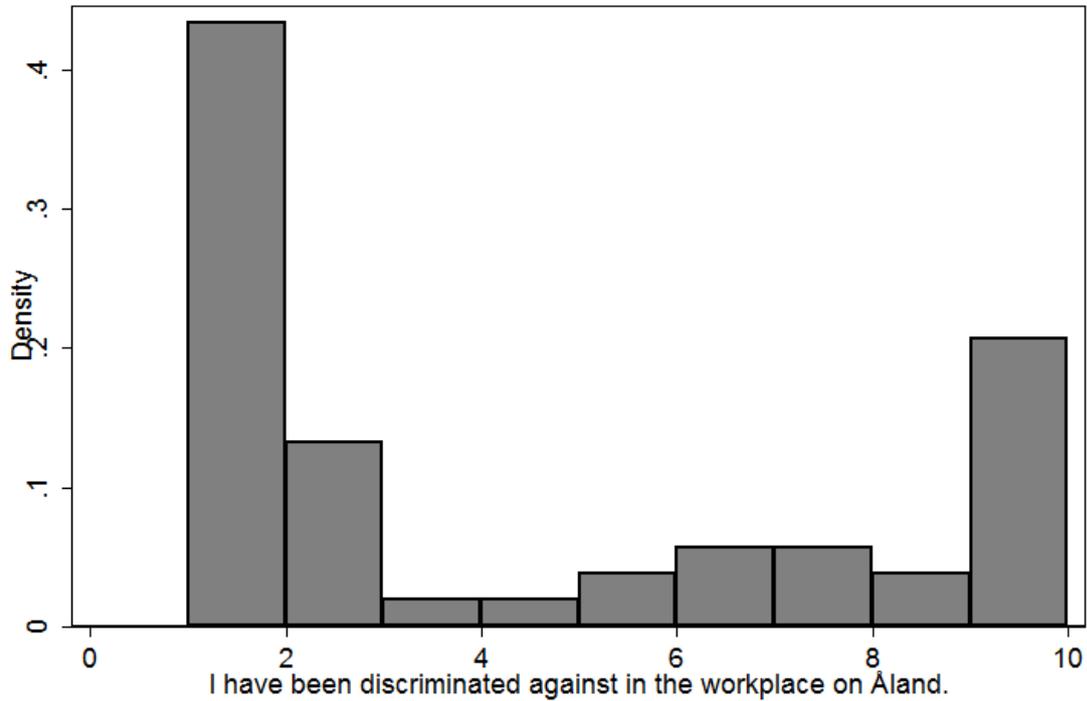
Another factor accounting for the insignificance of friendships networks for labor market integration is the importance of “weak ties” (that is, acquaintanceships) in the job search, as described by Granoveter (1973) in his article. Indeed, both migrant groups (university-educated and otherwise) report surprisingly similar levels of mostly Ålandic acquaintanceships (Table 2). Also, it is worth noting that, in our study we inquired only for the majority of one’s friends and acquaintances, and not for their numbers or exact proportion; while our simplification was necessary for the sake of survey brevity, it also resulted in significant biases in the data, making our findings regarding social networks only exploratory and more in-depth research requisite to inform any further conclusions.

## 6. Discrimination

Thirty percent of respondents to a recent survey undertaken by the Statistics and Research Åland (ÅSUB) 30% have reported being discriminated against. The distribution of reported discrimination instances reflects the ethnic hierarchy earlier discussed. While only 29% of Swedish speakers reported discrimination, the figure was 40% for speakers of other Nordic languages and 50% for speakers of non-Nordic languages (ÅSUB, 2007b: 24). Although the methodologies used were different, our findings mirror the ÅSUB results. 29 of our 55 respondents (52.7%) rated at least one discrimination-related statement<sup>22</sup> with a score of 5 or higher, on a 1 to 10 scale. The same figure is 39 out of 55 (70.9%) for those who gave discrimination-related statements at least one score higher than 1 (Never).

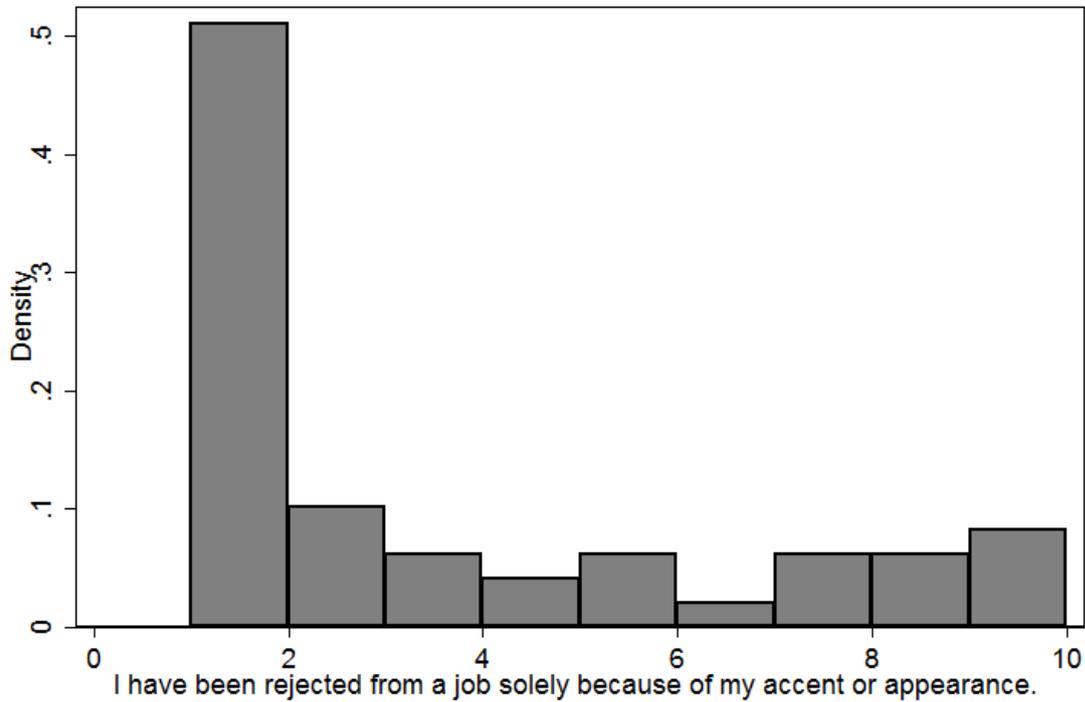
The native speakers of non-Nordic languages questioned by ÅSUB reported labor discrimination most frequently (22% of this group’s answers), a number smaller than the 37% reporting this form of discrimination in the Swedish-speaking sample (ÅSUB, 2007b: 34-35). Our results mirror the situation described by ÅSUB. A histogram reveals that 21% of our respondents chose the “often” answer, giving a definite “yes” to the question of discrimination in the workplace. It is noteworthy that given the opportunity to rate the truth of the statement on a scale, 21 (39.7%) of our respondents gave an answer higher than the median score 5, while only 43.4% of those who answered the question selected the value 1 (Never). For this reason we advance the possibility that the difference in reported labor discrimination is not necessarily a result of actually lower rates for non-Nordics, but rather the outcome of a different understanding of what does and does not constitute discrimination. The ÅSUB report lends credence to our hypothesis, as it reveals that, while close to 60% of speakers of Swedish

Figure 12. *Workplace Discrimination (histogram)*



Answers from 1 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement)

Figure 13. *First-gate rejection (histogram)*



Answers from 1 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement)

and other Nordic languages knew the definition of discrimination, only around 30% of non-Nordics did so (ÅSUB, 2007b: 45).

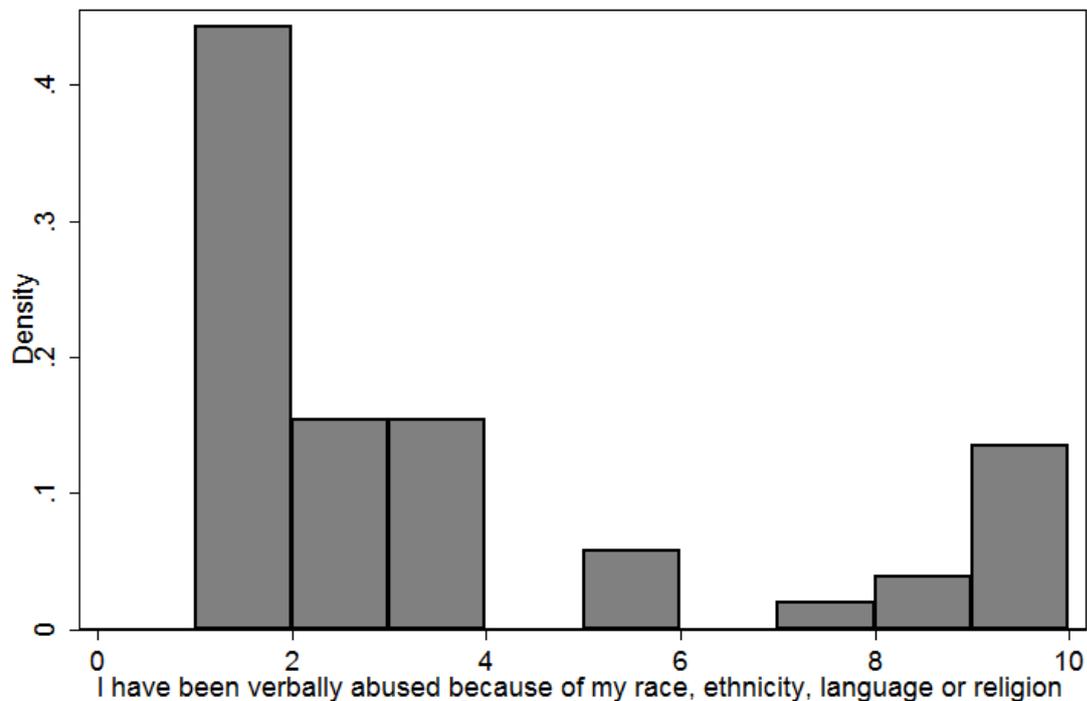
A similar situation appears in the ÅSUB findings regarding first-gate rejection. In the ÅSUB report, 17% of speakers of non-Nordic languages identified this form of discrimination, compared to the 16% of Swedish-speakers (ÅSUB, 2007b: 38). It might thus seem that non-Nordics enjoy roughly the same treatment in the job search on the part of Ålandic employers as native speakers of Swedish do. We do not fully disagree with this hypothesis, although the specialty literature cited earlier<sup>23</sup> gives us reason to think that there might be higher levels of first gate-rejection for migrants than for natives.

Our own survey (Figure 13) reveals that stacking together only the highest two ratings' frequencies would be sufficient to obtain a percentage similar to that reported by ÅSUB, while

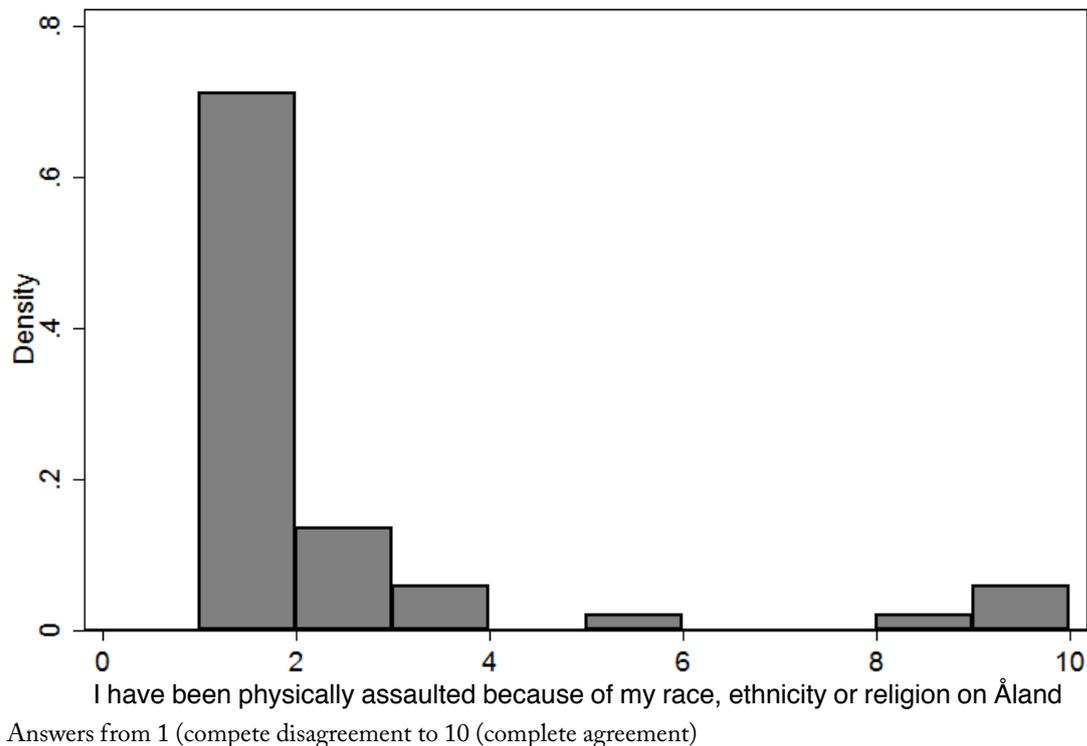
just under half of our respondents chose a variant different from “never” (1) in their evaluation of labor discrimination. It should be noted that, while we believe our assertion to be plausible, establishing its full truth (or falsity) would require another comparative investigation of Ålanders and migrants that would allow for more nuanced answers to discrimination-related questions.

Verbal discrimination was another form of discrimination both we and ÅSUB investigated, though in different ways. ÅSUB's findings reveal lower values of reported discriminatory comments for speakers of non-Nordic languages (29%) than overall (31%). Determining verbal discrimination poses issues not only in establishing its definition, but also in the victim's perception of discrimination, oftentimes contingent on proficiency in the adoptive society's language and culture: i.e., a French-speaking African migrant newly arrived in the United States might

Figure 14a. *Verbal Abuse (histogram)*



Answers from 1 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement)

*Figure 14b. Assault (histogram)*

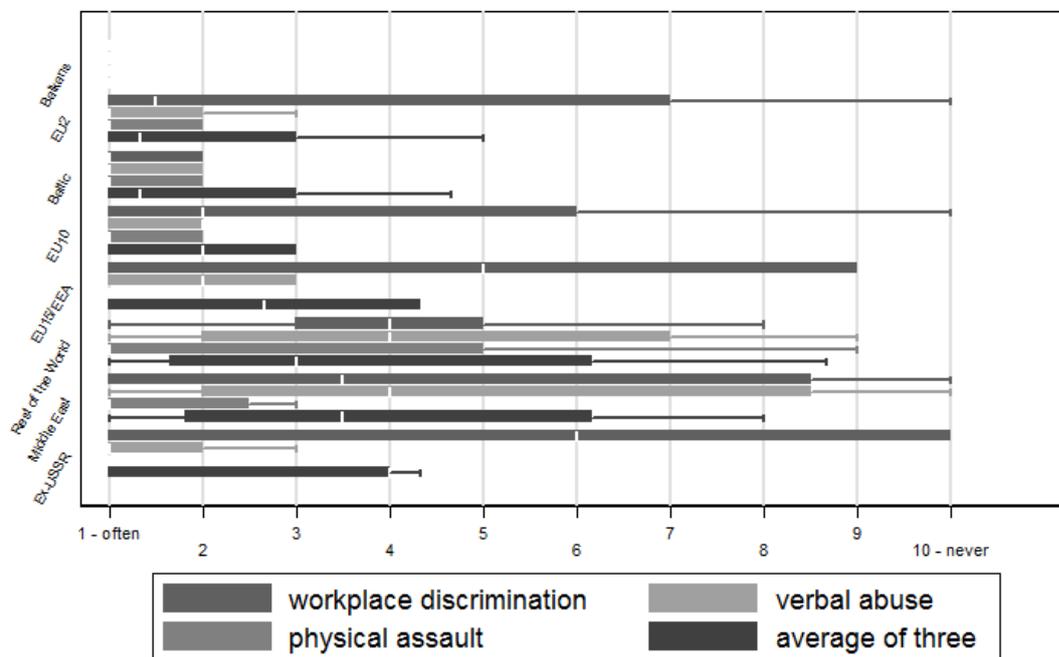
not be offended by a comment about how “articulate” he is, lacking the linguistic and cultural knowledge that would enable him to discern the comment’s racist double-entendre. Instructively, speakers of other Nordic languages, who usually have a good level of Swedish proficiency and are more attuned to the norms of Nordic societies, reported a higher frequency of discriminatory comments (47%) than in the overall.

These observations make us believe that many migrants lack the knowledge necessary to establish verbal discrimination in instances where it is not immediately evident through the use of expletives, given that in our own sample 47% of respondents evaluated their Swedish-language ability as average or worse. Our survey asked for instances of “verbal abuse”, a more acute subset of discriminatory comments, which normally do not require cultural or linguistic proficiency to identify.

Figure 14a shows that close to 20% of migrants reported having been verbally abused quite frequently while 55.8% of our respondents chose an answer different from “never.” As one would expect, physical assault was a much less frequent occurrence than verbal abuse for our respondents, although it did happen at least infrequently to about three tenths of our respondents (Figure 14b), while 3 subjects out of 52 reported frequent occurrences (scores of 9 and 10).

The same ethnic hierarchy earlier discussed seems to structure the frequency of discrimination as well. Figure 15 plots the median values and ranges of three measures of discrimination described above – work-place discrimination, verbal abuse and physical assault – as well as an average value of the three variables. Sorting by this last indicator reveals that migrants from the Former Soviet Union and the Middle East experience more discrimination than those from the

Figure 15. Measures of discrimination, by ethnic group (box-and-whisker plot)



1=often, 2=never. Average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges = 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values; isolated dots = outside values.

Baltic Region and the rest of Eastern Europe. While workplace discrimination accounts for the very high average registered by migrants coming from the Ex-Soviet space, Middle Eastern immigrants recorded far more frequent occurrences of verbal and physical abuse, a situation we hypothesize to be caused by the Middle Easterners' darker features typically making them stand out more as foreigners than is the case with other groups. Moreover, although a good part of our Middle Eastern respondents were non-Muslim (either Bahá'í or atheist), it is plausible that they nonetheless were the targets of anti-Islamic prejudice, because of the popular-culture conflation of Islam and the Middle East.

While non-Nordics are more likely to be discriminated, they are also less inclined to react to

discrimination, according to ÅSUB. 60% of this category reported not having taken action after having been discriminated, while the percentage was 50% for Swedish-speakers and 35% for speakers of other Nordic languages (2007b: 41). Although all three groups chose having gotten used to discrimination as the most important reason, the non-Nordic group differ from the other two in their second most frequent choice of causes for inaction, namely lack of information, reported by 21% of those non-Nordic speakers in the ÅSUB survey who did not take action after having been discriminated against. Once more we encounter insufficient information as one frequent cause of migrants' vulnerable position in the Ålandic society, an issue which we address in the next chapter.

## 7. Government Action

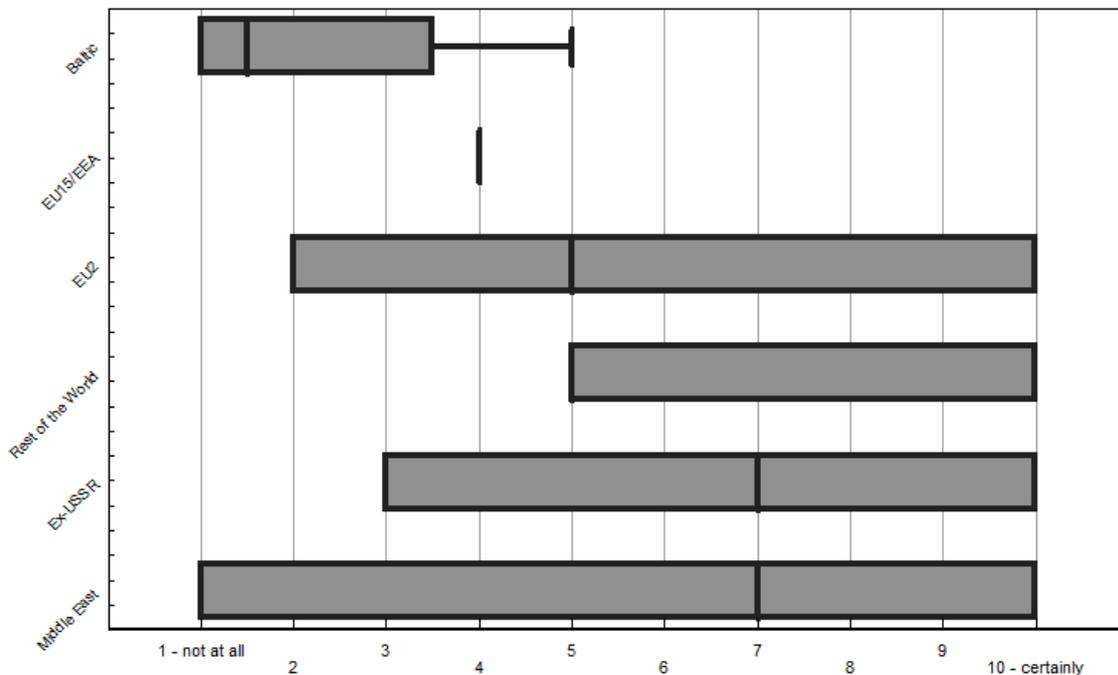
Ensuring equality of opportunity for newcomers to a society is a widely accepted policy objective in the European Union and in Finland. Because of their marginal position in their adoptive society, migrants are typically regarded as one of the most vulnerable groups to discrimination, an issue which requires special attention on part of the state.

In the case of Åland, our respondents had a moderate perception of how well the local authorities did their job in addressing anti-immigrant sentiment. In our survey the statement “Åland authorities have been dedicated to fighting racism and xenophobia” received a mean rating of 5.2.<sup>25</sup>

We also asked our respondents if “in any case of discrimination against [them] the Åland authorities [had] acted quickly and professional-

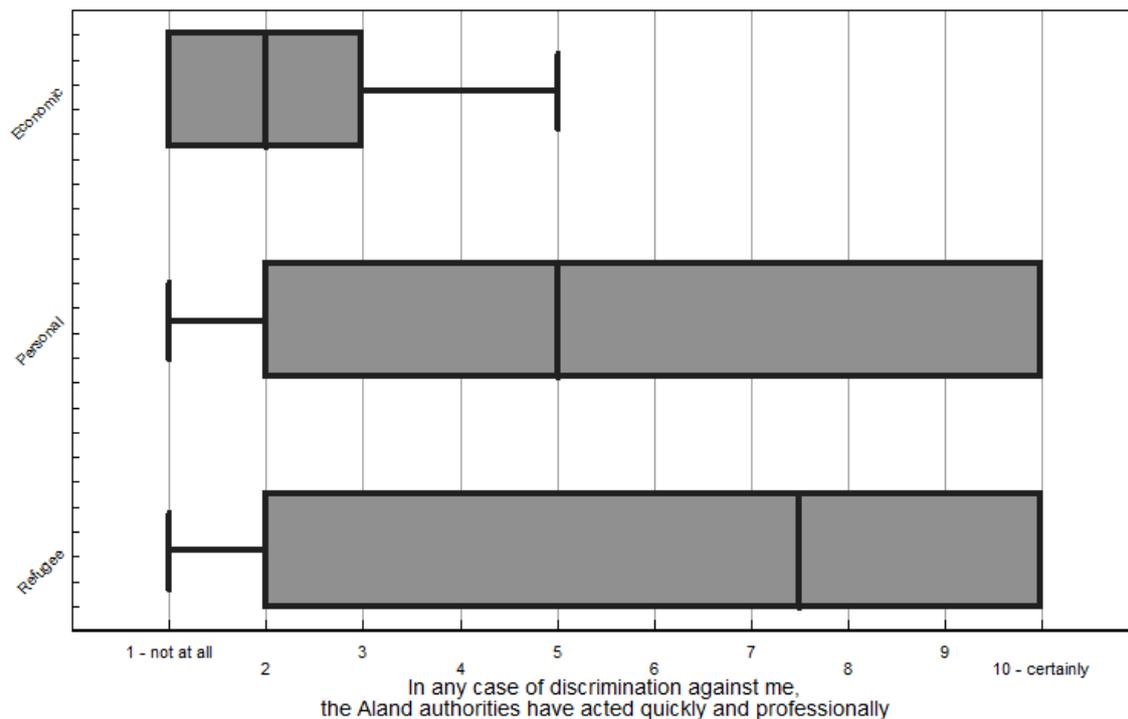
ly” – this was also a question which received a moderate answer (4.7), backed by the findings the ÅSUB report, in which 50% of non-Nordic respondents reported their discrimination complaints to have generated results, compared to 48% of the Swedish-speaking population (ÅSUB, 2007b: 41). The scores of our respondents’ reports of government action against discrimination in their case were rather widely distributed. A casual examination of the distribution of answers to this question yields a surprising conclusion. The treatment of discrimination cases by the Åland authorities seems to be completely at odds with the ethnic hierarchy determined in previous chapters, migrants from the former Soviet Union and the Middle East reporting better treatment than those from the Baltic region or the rest of Eastern Europe (Figure 16a). The primary reason for emigration predicts equally large differences in the reported re-

Figure 16a. Response to discrimination, by origin (box-and-whisker plot)



1=not at all, 2=certainly. Average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges = 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values; isolated dots = outside values.

Figure 16b. Response to discrimination, by primary reason for emigration (box-and-whisker plot)



1=not at all, 2=certainly. Average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges = 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values; isolated dots = outside values.

actions of Ålandic authorities, however, and we believe this to be the underlying cause of differences. The arrival of refugees in a new country presupposes close contact with the authorities, which also insures better channels of communications between this group and the state, and thus faster and better reactions to cases of discrimination. Similarly, migrants for “personal” reasons oftentimes come to join their family already living in their new community, and thus have access to social capital, in the form of accumulated knowledge about dealing with the government; this kind of specific knowledge on part of migrants raises the likelihood, we believe, of efficient government intervention in cases of discrimination. This is not the case with economic migrants, however, who typically don’t have the government attention or ready-made

social networks refugees and, respectively, family migrants enjoy.

In addition to the prevention of discrimination, social security represents another important measure for ensuring the successful integration of immigrants. Nordic states in particular take a universal approach to social security, explicitly extending benefits to migrants. Finland makes no exception to this pattern: the latest yearbook published by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA, 2005) explicitly states that all Finnish residents can access unemployment benefits, a “labor market subsidy” (323), housing benefits, as well as pension cover (335) and national health insurance (317). According to the Finnish Act on the Application of Residence-Based Social Security Legislation (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 1993),

Social security legislation applies to persons permanently resident in Finland who have their actual place of residence and home in Finland and who principally reside here on a continuous basis. (§3)

Assuming that our respondents do in fact qualify for Finnish residency under the afore-mentioned act, either as refugees, permanent employees or as family members of Finnish residence (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2004: §3a), we can only notice that a significant part of migrants on Åland are not fully knowledgeable about their social security entitlements. Even if we discount the answers of those migrants that arrived in Finland during 2006 and 2007, who might not necessarily qualify as Finnish residents, Table 3 reveals that our respondents were only partly aware, at best, of their entitlements. Besides giving this small “test” to our respondents, we also asked if they “had a good idea of the benefits [they] were entitled to as an immigrant living on Åland”. This statement registered a mean score of 5.56<sup>26</sup> on a 1-10 scale, lending credence to our hypothesis of limited access to social security information for migrants.

Multiculturalism is another area which has received ample attention in Finland, where the state has made the transition from primarily assimilationist policies – the norm until the late 1990s

– to an approach that stresses, at least in theory, the values of multiculturalism and pluralism, as enshrined in the 1997 Government Program on Integration and Refugee Policy (Pitkänen & Kouki, 2004: 107). Popular perceptions of multiculturalism in Nordic countries inexorably tie this value to immigration and place the onus of establishing «diversity» on the migrants themselves. Forsander (2004: 5) notes that:

In discussions about immigration, the perception that multiculturalism and diversity increase with the arrival of immigrants appears frequently. In other words, cultural diversity is seen as something that immigrants bring with them to “our” country and as something separate from “us” or the majority culture. This perception defines multiculturalism as something that, if it were not for immigrants Nordic societies would not have; in other words something that immigrants, not the majority population, are responsible for. Thus the immigrant embodies the idea of multiculturalism.

In order to get a feeling for the extent to which the actions, and not just the declarations, of public authorities on Åland have taken into account the principles of multiculturalism, we asked our respondents to rate the sentence “The government is paying enough attention to multicult-

*Table 3. Social Security Endowments*

Entitlement	Aware respondents	Unaware respondents	% Aware
Unemployment benefits	19	21	47,5%
Swedish language courses if unemployed	18	22	45,0%
Finnish health insurance	27	13	67,5%
Housing benefits	25	15	62,5%

Estimate based on respondents who came to Finland earlier than 2006 (n=40). Number of “aware” respondents calculated by those who gave a score of 8-10 (or 1-3 where applicable) to the respective sentence. “Unaware” respondents are calculated by subtracting the number of aware respondents from the total number; this figure thus comprises all scores different than the ones previously mentioned, as well as non-answers.

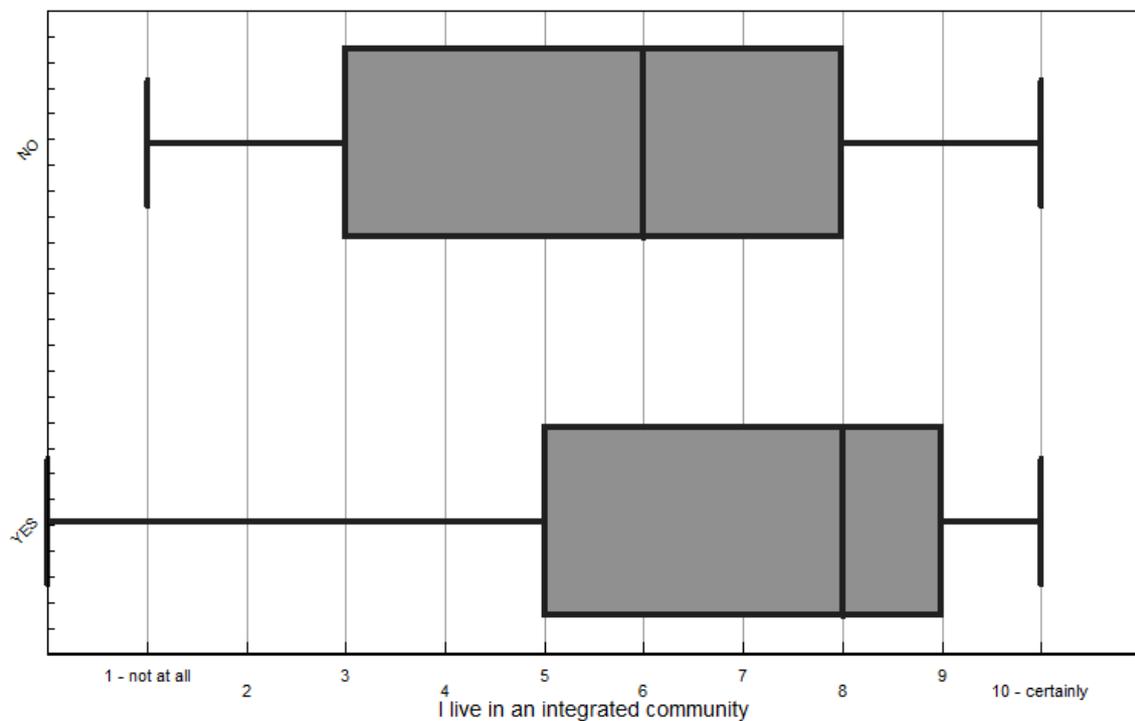
tural issues”. In our questionnaire we made the deliberate choice not to make any distinctions between the local and central branches of government present on Åland. The Åland Islands have quite a complex political organization and we considered it an undue burden to ask our respondents to differentiate between the Government of Åland and Finnish central authorities in their evaluation. Similarly, when asking our question we were well aware of the ambiguities inherent in the term “multiculturalism”; ours being an exploratory study, we had only limited space for each section we wanted to investigate and we considered that going into the semantics of the term would not only confuse the respondents to our survey but also make the survey more time consuming and reduce our response rate. For these reasons, we left it to our respondents to decide what “multiculturalism” means and to

rate the extent to which they think the government is doing their job.

The mean evaluation of the afore-mentioned sentence was exactly 5,<sup>27</sup> on the same 1 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree) scale we have used throughout the survey. This moderate result highlights that, at least from our respondents’ point of view, more multicultural awareness is necessary in government policies. Naturally, our hypothesis requires further testing in a more detailed investigation of multiculturalism on Åland.

One last area to which we paid particular attention in our survey was education, which migration literature often highlights as a disputed area. The extent to which our respondents declared themselves happy with the schooling their children received on Åland is remarkable, the mean score to this question being 8.63,<sup>28</sup>

*Figure 17. Estimated integration correlated with having children in school on Åland (y-axis; box-and-whisker plot)*



1=not at all, 2=certainly. Average for each category found on median, left and right box hinges = 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile values; end of whiskers = lowest and highest adjacent values; isolated dots = outside values.

close to full agreement, while the lowest score registered was 4. In addition to rating their overall satisfaction with the school system, we also asked our respondents to evaluate to what extent their children had the opportunity to learn about their own culture in school on Åland. This statement's ratings paint a radically different picture from the former, registering only a mean score of 4.72 on a 1-10 scale.

Two hypotheses emerge here. Either this group of migrants wants to assimilate to a large degree and does not regard it as important that their children learning about their parents' culture, or they are very happy with the quality of schools on Åland in spite of what they see as a failure in part of the schools to address multicultural concerns. The fact discussed before that, as a whole, our migrant respondents did consider that there was room for more attention to multiculturalism on part of the government seems to support our latter hypothesis, as many of our respondents perceived as important multicultural issues, which very likely include their children having the opportunity to learn about "their" culture in school. At this point, due to our sample's small size, we can only speculate on this subject, and conclude that only more (qualitative) research could help shed light on whether Åland's schools are inclusive enough of migrants in their curriculum.

Irrespective of the school curriculum, a better appreciation of integration is one very possible outcome of having children in school on Åland. Figure 17 plots the migrants' evaluation of integration against a categorical variable indicating if the respondent has children in school on Åland.<sup>29</sup> The graph reveals that migrant parents of Ålandic students are more likely to think of their community as integrated than those migrants who do not have children or whose children do not study on Åland (Figure 17). A likely explanation for this correlation is that having children in school facilitates social interaction

with locals, especially the kind of "bridging", acquaintanceship ties discussed earlier.<sup>30</sup>

Under Finnish social security law, Swedish-language instruction is freely available to unemployed migrants who are permanent Finnish residents, as part of a so-called "integration plan". While this policy has good intention at its roots, it acts in a counter-intuitive way, depriving employed migrants of this opportunity. Our findings support this hypothesis, the statement "Free Swedish-language instruction is sufficiently available on Åland" rating 4.95 on a 1-10 scale.

## 8. Conclusions

The case of immigrant integration on Åland presents positive aspects as well as challenges for the future, of which easing the integration of migrants on the local labor market is probably the biggest. Our findings suggest that there is not a considerable problem/issue of pay discrimination between natives and non-Nordic immigrants, if the former can find jobs matching their qualifications. Not every migrant manages to meet this condition, however, and the local employers' reluctance to take foreign credentials at face value – at which this study indirectly points – falls in line with similar attitudes registered on mainland Finland. This disjuncture leads not only to labor market segmentation, but to the underutilization of human capital, a strange phenomenon in a labor-scarce setting like Åland, as well as to a great deal of frustration on part of those directly affected by such attitudes.

We have also found that not all of Åland's immigrants are treated equally. A consistent pattern emerges throughout our study, of an ethnic hierarchy present on Åland, with Middle Easterners and migrants from the former Soviet Un-

ion on its lowest rung. Both groups report high degrees of “first-gate” rejection on the job market, “degree inflation” as well as high overall levels of discrimination in the workplace. Moreover, Middle Easterners are the group with by far the highest incidence of verbal abuse, as well as a higher average of reported instances of physical assault. This group’s situation appears paradoxical, in view of the fact that they have the longest history on the islands, much longer than the period during which Eastern Europeans – a group whose average levels of discrimination place in the middle of the ethnic hierarchy – have been on Åland.

Access to information appears to be another problem for our respondents, many of whom were not aware of the social security entitlements which they had under Finnish law. Our survey also revealed that in the field of education the level of satisfaction with Åland schools is notable, but this is not the result of a particularly inclusive approach in the local curriculum. Finally, those who answered our survey also demanded quite frequently the increase in availability of Swedish-language classes on Åland.

The enumeration of the said problem areas shows that there is a lot of room for improvement in immigrant integration on Åland. However, one should not lose sight of the positive sides of the situation of migrants on the islands. Discrimination, especially in its manifest forms, was not a big problem for most of our respondents, though we must emphasize the need to study in particular those groups (Asians, the unemployed) that our study did not cover. In line with the general economic situation of the islands, most migrants reported work easy to find, though less so for those who had a university education. Even though problems exist, the political and economical resources of Åland make this small-scale society particularly fit to tackle these challenges and integrate the latest wave of migrants coming to its shores.

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## Notes

- 1 The author wishes to thank for their invaluable support: Andreea Bolos, Justina Donielaite, Petra Granholm, Robert Janson and Sia Åkermark, (The Åland Islands Peace Institute), Kaveh Bahar (Multikulturella föreningen på Åland), Veronika Boman (Åland Register Office), Annika Forsander (Åbo Akademi), Jouko Kinnunen (ÅSUB), and Tuomas Martikainen (Åbo Akademi), as well as everyone else working for the Peace Institute, and naturally all the survey's respondents. This study was funded in part through an Amherst College Fellowship for Action: the author wishes to extend his gratitude to the administrators of the Hecht-Rosenberg Internship Fund, and to the employees of the Amherst College Career Center for making this investigation possible.
- 2 As revealed by the latest ÅSUB monthly unemployment statistics ([http://www.asub.aland.fi/files/Arblos\\_09\\_2007.pdf](http://www.asub.aland.fi/files/Arblos_09_2007.pdf))
- 3 Blomfelt (1973: 68-69) notes that between 1860 and 1930 "around 12000 persons emigrated from Åland to the US." (translation mine)
- 4 I am grateful to Jouko Kinnunen (ÅSUB) for having pointed out this phenomenon, in our August 2007 conversations.
- 5 We believe however, that Romanians are not really the third largest migrant group on the island according to country of origin, as many Iranian refugees have given up their citizenships. Indeed, at the end of 2006 there were a combined 84 Farsi and Kurdish native speakers living on Åland (ÅSUB, 2007a).
- 6 See, for instance the "Arbeta & Bo på Åland" website ([www.komhem.nu](http://www.komhem.nu))
- 7  $n = 50$ ;  $\sigma = 2.43$ ; std. error = .34; 95% confidence interval between 3.81 and 5.29.;
- 8  $N = 54$ ; std. error = .41; confidence interval: 4.02 – 5.65, on a 1-10 scale.
- 9 "Mailbox" sampling was possible because it is extremely common on the Åland Islands for people to write their names on mailboxes. It was thus up to the research team only to check all mailboxes in Mariehamn for non-Nordic names.
- 10 I.e., 20% of Ålanders bear one of ten last names (ÅSUB, 2007a)
- 11 The remaining four migrants worked in Mariehamn but resided outside the town's boundaries.
- 12 By non-responders we understand here all sampled person who either did not reply to our survey or did so anonymously.
- 13 The Diskriminerings Ombudsmannen's mail-in study on discrimination on Åland, which was carried on for a longer period of time and with a more intense follow-up procedure registered a response rate of only 50% (Larpes-Papadopolou)
- 14 There are several explanations for this disparity. Middle Easterners, especially Iranians and Kurds are grossly overrepresented in ethnic businesses in Mariehamn, all of which were visited by the Peace Institute Research Team. In addition, Middle Easterners also form some of the earlier cohorts of migrants, most of them having arrived as refugees throughout the late 1980s and 1990s: one would expect thus that they would have formed better social networks facilitating the spread of information about the survey. Furthermore, the Institute's provision of a Farsi-language survey undeniably boosted response rates amongst Iranian and Kurdish refugees (most if not all of the latter also came to Åland from Iran): six of the surveys we received were submitted in Farsi. At first glance the fact that our sample is greater than the number of Middle Eastern citizens registered as living in Mariehamn might also appear puzzling, were one not to account for the specific characteristics of this ethnic group. Middle Easterners live or work almost exclusively in Mariehamn: in March 2007 there were only 8 Middle Eastern citizens living outside of Mariehamn on Åland, according to Statistics Finland, and half of this group lived in Jomala and was thus most likely working in Mariehamn as well. The citizenship statistics do not capture the whole situation however: refugees make up the Middle-Eastern group by-and-large, many Kurdish and Iranian ethnics having given up their citizenship in the years past. Indeed, although only 73 Middle Eastern

- Citizens were registered as living on Åland in March 2007, ÅSUB reported a combined number of 101 persons having Kurdish, Persian or Arabic as their mother tongue (ÅSUB, 2007a). This number is, we believe, closer to the real number of Middle Eastern migrants living and working in Mariehamn.
- 15 I am grateful to Justina Donielaite for having suggested this explanation. The argument is plausible, as the male-female ratio among the Asians living in Mariehamn is 13-24, women outnumbering men by close to 100%.
  - 16  $N = 51$ ; std. deviation = 2.93; std. error = .41; confidence interval: 5.48 – 7.13.
  - 17 Economic migrants:  $N=17$ ,  $\mu = 6.41$   $\sigma = 2.79$ ; Refugees:  $N=9$ ,  $\mu = 6.89$   $\sigma = 2.15$ ; Personal reasons:  $N=18$ ,  $\mu = 6.28$   $\sigma = 3.37$ ; a t-test reveals that at the 95% confidence level there is a 74% chance that the refugees' valuation be different from 0; although the small size of our sample does not allow for a satisfactory regression estimate, we believe it likely that the effect on estimates of integration is a result of refugees having been on Åland longer than the average migrant: all 10 of our refugee respondents came to the islands before the year 2000, making up more than half of the total 18 respondents who came to Åland in the 1980s and 1990s.
  - 18 Dr. Sia Åkermark points out that generalized dissatisfaction with integration among those surveyed coupled with an inability to identify the exact issues might have caused high rate of non-responses.
  - 19 We did however receive answers from students and retirees, whom we have discounted as not in the labor force. [details needed]
  - 20 Mean = .57; 95% confidence interval: .53 - .61.
  - 21 "Re-migration" and "marital migration" are particularly important phenomena in the Finnish migration context. "Re-migrants" comprise ethnic Finns (mainly from the now-Russian region of Ingria) who came to Finland on the basis of a right-to-return law passed in the 1990s. The foreign spouses of Finnish citizens (what we call here "marital migrants") also represent a significant part of migration flows to Finland.
  - 22 The statements were: "I have been discriminated against in the workplace," "I have been verbally abused because of my race, religion, language or ethnicity," "I have been physically assaulted because of my race, ethnicity or religion on Åland" and "I have been rejected from a job solely based on my accent or appearance."
  - 23 See Valtonen, 2001; Paannanen, 1999.
  - 24 The Tampere European Council in 1999 called for the development of "a more vigorous integration policy [aiming at] granting [resident third-country nationals] rights and obligations comparable to those of EU citizens. It should also enhance non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural life and develop measures against racism and xenophobia." (Tampere European Council, A.III.18). Similarly, EU Directive 2003/109 states that "The integration of third-country nationals who are longterm residents in the Member States is a key element in promoting economic and social cohesion, a fundamental objective of the Community stated in the Treaty." (EU Directive 2003/109, Preamble, (4)).
  - 25 Rating based on a 1 (certainly not) – 10 (absolutely yes) scale;  $n = 45$ ; std. error = .43; 95% confidence interval between 4.34 and 6.06.
  - 26  $n = 50$ ; std. dev. = 3.20; std. error = .45
  - 27  $n = 41$ ;  $\sigma = 2.56$ ; std. error = .4; 95%; confidence interval: 4.19 – 5.81
  - 28  $n = 28$ ;  $\sigma = 1.79$ ; std. error = .33; 95% confidence interval: 7.94 - 9.33
  - 29 This variable was derived from the evaluations of the statement "I am satisfied with the quality of my children's schooling on Åland." We considered that any subject who answered this question at all did in fact have children in school on Åland.
  - 30 I have researched this hypothesis at the advice of Justina Donielaite, who also suggested my explanation. I am once again grateful to her.

## Appendix. Survey form (English)

A. Personal Information			
- the information recorded in this survey is for research purposes only; no personal data whatsoever will be released to the public or to any third party -			
For privacy reasons, giving out your name is <b>optional</b> :			3. Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
1. First Name: _____		2. Last Name: _____	
5. Address:			
4. Year of birth: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mariehamn <input type="checkbox"/> Brandö <input type="checkbox"/> Eckerö <input type="checkbox"/> Finström	<input type="checkbox"/> Föglö <input type="checkbox"/> Geta <input type="checkbox"/> Hammarland <input type="checkbox"/> Jomala	<input type="checkbox"/> Kumlinge <input type="checkbox"/> Kökar <input type="checkbox"/> Lemland <input type="checkbox"/> Lumparland
<input type="checkbox"/> Saltvik <input type="checkbox"/> Sottunga <input type="checkbox"/> Sund <input type="checkbox"/> Vårdö			
6. City and country of birth: _____			
7. Country(-ies) of citizenship: _____		8. Ethnic group (if relevant): _____	
9. Native language(s): _____ <small>2. What language spoken at home: (beginner – b)</small>		10. Language spoken at home: _____	
11. Religion: _____		12. Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> single <input type="checkbox"/> married since _____ (year only) <input type="checkbox"/> cohabitation <input type="checkbox"/> divorced/separated since ____ (year only) <input type="checkbox"/> widow / widower	
B. Migration background			
1. Year of arrival in Finland: _____		3. Previous country of residence before coming to Åland: <input type="checkbox"/> same as country of birth <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden	
2. Year of arrival on Åland: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Finland <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	
4. What were your reasons for <u>emigrating from your country of origin</u> ? (Check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> to find work or start a new business;	<input type="checkbox"/> to escape religious and/or political persecution	<input type="checkbox"/> personal reasons – e.g. family reunification	<input type="checkbox"/> other - please detail: _____ _____
5. What were your reasons for <u>coming to Åland</u> ? (Check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> to find work or start a new business;	<input type="checkbox"/> to escape religious and/or political persecution	<input type="checkbox"/> personal reasons – e.g. family reunification	<input type="checkbox"/> other - please detail: _____ _____
6. Do you intend to permanently return to your country of origin in the next few years? <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> yes   <input type="checkbox"/> no</span>			
C. Education and skills			
1. Highest level of schooling completed:			
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> High school (years 9-12)	<input type="checkbox"/> PhD	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade school (years 1-4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional qualification (e.g. nursing)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please detail) _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle school (years 5-8)	<input type="checkbox"/> University degree	_____	

2. What languages do you speak and at what level?

(beginner – basic knowledge of the language, able to communicate in simple, day-to-day situations; intermediate – ability to understand and use the language in most contexts; advanced – ability to communicate clearly, and with few mistakes; (like) native – native-speaker level )

Swedish       beginner  intermediate  advanced  (like) native

Finnish       beginner  intermediate  advanced  (like) native

English       beginner  intermediate  advanced  (like) native

Please fill in all other languages you speak and indicate your level of proficiency:

\_\_\_\_\_  beginner  intermediate  advanced  (like) native

4. What is your profession? \_\_\_\_\_

5. For how many years have you been working in general? \_\_\_\_\_ years

6. For how many years have you been working in your profession? \_\_\_\_\_ years

**D. Employment-related information**

1. Are you currently employed?

yes – I have been working with my employer for \_\_\_\_ months;

no – I have been without work for \_\_\_\_\_ months;

2. In what sector is/was your current/last job? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Approximately, what was your wage income last year? \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Family information**

1. How many children under 14 live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many persons age 14-18 live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many persons over 18 live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Other than your immediate family, do you have relatives living on Åland?  yes  no

5. Do any of your immediate family members (children or spouse) live outside of Åland?  
 yes  no

F. Integration Issues										
Check all that apply:										
1. Most of my close friends:					2. Most of my acquaintances:					
<input type="checkbox"/> belong to my own ethnic group; <input type="checkbox"/> are from the same country as me; <input type="checkbox"/> speak the same native language as me; <input type="checkbox"/> are from the same part of the world as me; <input type="checkbox"/> have the same religion as me; <input type="checkbox"/> are Åland natives; <input type="checkbox"/> are foreign; <input type="checkbox"/> come from other European countries; <input type="checkbox"/> speak Swedish;					<input type="checkbox"/> belong to my own ethnic group; <input type="checkbox"/> are from the same country as me; <input type="checkbox"/> speak the same native language as me; <input type="checkbox"/> are from the same part of the world as me; <input type="checkbox"/> have the same religion as me; <input type="checkbox"/> are Åland natives; <input type="checkbox"/> are foreign; <input type="checkbox"/> come from other European countries; <input type="checkbox"/> speak Swedish					
Using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree) please evaluate how well the following sentences describe your situation. If question does not apply to you, please leave empty.										
3. I live in an integrated community.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4. I feel confident in my ability to speak Swedish.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5. I have a good relationship with my neighbors.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6. Generally speaking, most non-Nordic immigrants to Åland have a hard time making local friends.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7. There are plenty of opportunities for immigrants to learn Swedish on Åland.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8. Most of Åland's non-Nordic immigrants live in a separate society from the native population.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9. Native Ålanders have a good opinion of immigrants.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

G. Workplace Issues										
1. My current job provides sufficient opportunities for professional advancement.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2. My current job matches my professional qualifications.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3. Mostly, I work together with other immigrants.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4. I was able to find work quickly on Åland.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5. There was no problem for employers to accept my foreign educational degrees.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6. I speak Swedish at work.										
Never										Always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7. I have the same salary as an Ålandic employee with my qualifications.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8. Immigrants have a harder time finding work on Åland because they don't speak Swedish well enough.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9. Immigrants have a harder time finding work on Åland because of employer prejudice.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10. Immigrants can easily find work on Åland.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11. The Government is doing enough to help immigrants find jobs on Åland.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
12. Free Swedish-language instruction is sufficiently available on Åland.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

H. Immigrant entitlements										
1. I am not entitled to unemployment benefits.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2. If I am unemployed, the state will pay for free Swedish language classes.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3. I am not covered by national Finnish health insurance.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4. If my income is below a certain level, I am entitled to housing benefits.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5. I have a good idea of what benefits I am entitled to as an immigrant living on Åland.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6. Most immigrants to Åland know their rights well enough.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7. The state does a good job of communicating to immigrants their rights.										
Not at all										Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
I. Discrimination										
1. I have been discriminated against in the workplace on Åland.										
Never										Often
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2. I have been verbally abused because of my race, ethnicity, language or religion on Åland.										
Never										Often
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3. I have been physically assaulted because of my race, ethnicity or religion on Åland.										
Never										Often
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4. In any case of discrimination against me, the Åland authorities have acted quickly and professionally.										
Never										Often
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5. I have been rejected from a job solely because of my accent or appearance.										
Never										Often
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

6. Åland authorities have been dedicated to fighting racism and xenophobia.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Employers on Åland are prejudiced against immigrants.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Åland's news media provides a balanced reflection of immigrants.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>J. Education and Culture</b>									
1. I am satisfied with the quality of my children's schooling.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. My children have ample opportunity to learn about their culture in school.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. I am satisfied with the Swedish-language instruction available to my children on Åland.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. The government is paying enough attention to multicultural issues.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Swedish-language classes are free and open to everyone on Åland.									
Not at all									Certainly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>K. Miscellaneous</b>									
1. What measures do you think would make integration easier for Åland's immigrants?									
<hr/>									
<hr/>									
<hr/>									
2. Any other concerns you would like to let us know about?									
<hr/>									
<hr/>									
<hr/>									

## Sammanfattning på svenska

### Förord

Åland som en stark ekonomisk region i Europa erfar en ökning av invandringen under senare år. I absoluta tal rör det sig inte om höga siffror, men i förhållande till befolkningmängden och tidigare invandringstakt är ökningen märkbar.

Bogdan State, högskolepraktikant vid Ålands fredsinstitut under sommaren 2007, har gjort en sociologisk studie av integrationen på Åland. Studien samlar data om immigranterna, deras situation och uppfattningar om integrationen samt försöker utvärdera dessa. Studien omfattar endast Mariehamn och långt ifrån alla immigranter på Åland. Den kan därmed endast ge indikationer och trender, som i sin tur kan ge anledning att närmare granska frågor som tas upp.

Bogdan State hade omfattande kontakter med flera personer och institutioner som arbetar med olika aspekter av integrationen på Åland, inklusive magistraten, Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå (ÅSUB) och Ålands mångkulturella förening. Han diskuterade sitt arbete med bl.a. Lars-Erik Karlsson, ordförande i den av regeringen tillsatta integrationskommittén som lämnade sin rapport i november 2007, diskrimineringsombudsmannen Veronica Larpes-Papadopoulou, som i september 2007 presenterade en rapport om diskriminering på Åland samt Kaveh Bahar från Ålands mångkulturella förening. Ålands fredsinstituts rapport har på så sätt ingått i och påverkat den pågående diskussionen om integrationsfrågor på Åland.

Ålands fredsinstitut hoppas att det finns intresse för många av de frågor som lyfts fram i rapporten och en vilja att bearbeta dem vidare.

*Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark  
Direktör, Ålands fredsinstitut*

### Sammanfattning

Bogdan State gjorde för Ålands fredsinstitut en studie av integrationen av immigranter till Åland sommaren 2007. Undersökningens metod var en enkät utdelad till 190 personer med utländska namn i Mariehamn. Enkätens omfattande frågeformulär, som finns i rapportens appendix, rörde immigranternas bakgrund och skäl för migrationen, utbildning, språkkunskaper, familjesituation, arbete, kontakter och sociala nätverk på Åland, socialförsäkringsfrågor, medvetenhet om rättigheter och skyldigheter, erfarenheter av diskriminering och frågor rörande skolan på Åland.

Begreppet integration delas i rapporten upp i två huvudsakliga element:

- ekonomisk integration
- social integration

Trots att dessa två aspekter är ömsesidigt relaterade, konstaterar rapporten att ekonomisk integration inte alltid innebär automatisk eller full social integration, varför båda aspekterna bör beaktas.

Nedan presenteras kort studiens viktigaste resultat. Författaren påpekar ofta i rapporten att olika fenomen bör undersökas närmare då tolkningen av resultaten inte alltid är entydiga eller lättförklarliga. En grupp som behöver särskilt undersökas i framtiden är arbetslösa invandrare. Inga svar till enkäten kom från personer utan arbete.

Ett första område som studeras i rapporten är integrationen på arbetsmarknaden, där tidig bortgallring (s.k. first-gate rejection) av immigranter och undervärdering av eller skepsis om studiequalifikationer och examina är ett problem. Studien finner att invandrare från Mel-

lanöstern och forna Sovjetunionen möter största problemen i det avseendet. Arbete med validering av examina är ett steg att bemöta problemet, men ännu viktigare tycks det vara att arbeta med kunskap och attitydförändringar för att förändra förtroendeunderskottet beträffande examina och kvalifikationer från andra länder.

Ovanstående problem kan vara en förklaring till varför högre utbildade tycks möta störst problem med att få arbete på Åland. Högre utbildning innebär inte snabbare integration på den åländska arbetsmarknaden. Studiens författare befarar att Åland inte utnyttjar alla existerande resurser trots diskussioner och uppgifter om arbetskraftsbrist. Å andra sidan visar studien begränsade erfarenheter av lönediskriminering när man väl har kommit in på arbetsmarknaden. Tidsaspekten är intressant och kräver vidare undersökning. Underlaget ger anledning att tro att det ofta tar över fem år innan inträdet på arbetsmarknaden sker, något som kan betecknas som en relativt lång tid både för Åland och för de personer som flyttar hit.

Ett annat överraskande resultat är att högre utbildade rapporterar att de har vänner främst bland andra invandrare från samma land. Högre utbildade ansåg också oftare att ålänningar har en negativ attityd gentemot invandrare, något som möjligen kan bero på ovanstående svårigheter med att få arbete. Studien pekar också på att flyktingar och invandrare som kommer till en redan på Åland boende familj eller familjemedlem har genom existerande nätverk och kontakter med myndigheter bättre kontakter i det åländska samhället. Ensamma invandrare som flyttar hit av ekonomiska skäl saknar ofta dessa sociala nätverk.

Invandare saknar kunskap om socialförsäkringar och andra rättigheter och skyldigheter på Åland. Här finns det fortfarande möjligheter att konkret och enkelt arbeta vidare från offentligt håll i kombination med en expansion av olika möjligheter att lära sig svenska både för personer med arbete och även för personer utan arbete.

Studien pekar på viktiga och positiva resultat beträffande skolan på Åland. Svaren visar på uppskattning av den åländska skolan hos stora merparten tillfrågade. Detta trots att flera påpekade att deras barn inte hade fullgoda möjligheter att lära sig om den egna kulturen i skolan. Detta resultat kan tolkas på olika sätt; antingen att flera invandrare anser att det inte är i skolan som den egna kulturen ska läras och diskuteras, eller att skolan är mycket bra trots vissa brister i avspeglingen av samhällets mångfald och elevernas olika bakgrunder. Studiens författare pekar återigen här på behovet av närmare undersökningar av innehållet och metoderna i skolan beträffande hanteringen av andra kulturer och erfarenheter. En ytterst viktig aspekt som lyfts fram i studien är skolans roll i integreringen av hela familjen. Genom skolan får familjen ett naturligt socialt nätverk och familjer med skolbarn anser sig själva som bättre integrerade i det åländska samhället än personer utan skolbarn i familjen.

**Immigrant Integration on Åland**

– an exploratory study

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