

**National Data Collection
Systems and Practices**

Country Report Finland

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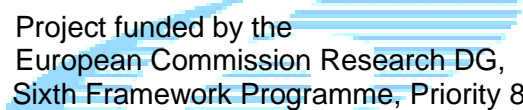
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Country Report Finland

by **Sirkku Wilkman**

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Table of Contents

A. Key data sources and responsible institutions.....	4
B. Historical evolution of the national data collection system and policies on data collection	5
C. Coordination and linking.....	7
D. Concepts and definitions	9
E. Availability of data	10
E.1. Core demographic data on immigrants and migration control	10
E.1.a Population stocks and general demographic data	10
E.1.b Migration flows and characteristics of migrants at the time of migration ..	11
E.1.c Legal status of immigrants	11
E.1.d Change of citizenship and multiple nationalities.....	12
E.1.e Asylum seeking and refugees	12
E.1.f Irregular migration	13
E.2. Measuring integration, discrimination and diversity	13
F. Quality and scope of data collection	15
G. Accessibility of data	16
H. Recommendations	17
References	19
Appendix	21

A. Key data sources and responsible institutions

In Finland, there are several national and international agencies, institutions, enterprises and corporations, which produce statistics. Four of the producers are statistical authorities according to the Finnish Statistics Act (*the Information Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES), Statistics Finland and the National Board of Customs*). The Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) and The National Public Health Institute (KTL) merged to form the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) on 1 January 2009. However, the statistical material is located on the old websites of the National Public Health Institute (KTL) and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES). Statistical authorities' right to collect data for statistical purposes is based on the obligation to provide data laid down in the Statistics Act (*tilastolaki*). The Statistics Act decrees that data collected for statistical purposes must be kept secret and confidential. Data collected for other purposes should be primarily used in the compilation of statistics. Besides complying with the national Statistic Act, Statistics Finland also applies in its statistics compilation statistical legal acts of the European Union, which set detailed requirements on the national statistics.

Statistics Finland is the national statistical institute and is responsible for the co-ordination of the entire national statistical service. Statistics Finland is also obliged also to maintain its' own registers: the Business Register (*yritys- ja toimipaikkarekisteri*), the Register of Completed Education and Degree (*tutkintorekisteri*), the Register of providers of education (*oppilaitos ja koulutoimintaa koskeva rekisteri*), the Student Register (*opiskelijarekisteri*) and the Archive of death (*kuolemansyyrekisteri*).

Statistics Finland is the general authority within **the National Statistical Service in Finland** and it administratively operates under the Ministry of Finance. Finland's international statistical co-operation is co-ordinated by Statistics Finland. Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) are a collection of regularly published statistics and publication series with an aim to draw an accurate picture of Finnish society. The Advisory Board of Official Statistics of Finland co-ordinates the system of official statistics. In addition, Statistics Finland maintains a list of the statistics and publications accepted into OSF. The producers of OSF include Statistics Finland and 19 other public authorities.

The National Population Information System is a central source of data in Finland. The Population Register Centre is responsible for maintaining the system. Production of Finnish population statistics is mainly based on the Population Information System. The National Population Information System is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. The Local Register Offices (*Maistraatti*) are responsible for registering the person's municipality of residence (home municipality) and addresses (permanent and temporary) in the Population Information System and are also responsible for updating the population register. There are 37 Local Register Offices in Finland.

The Finnish Immigration Service, Migri (previously the Directorate of Immigration), subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, is the agency that processes and decides on matters related to immigration, residence, refugee issues and Finnish nationality. Migri is responsible for the Register of Aliens. The data in the Register may also be used for the compilation of statistics.

The National Institute for Health and Welfare (former STAKES) acts as a statistical authority in the field of social welfare and health care in Finland. Their statistics include social and health services, alcohol and drugs and social and health expenditure. THL is also responsible for submitting data for international social and health statistics. THL maintains the SOTKANet indicator bank, which contains statistical information on welfare and health from 1990 onwards in Finnish municipalities (<http://uusi.sotkanet.fi>). The SOTKANet is trilingual (Finnish, Swedish, English) web information service and it is available to all users for free of charge.

Finnish Customs provide statistical services on foreign trade (import and export statistics). Information on the trade between Finland and other EU countries is collected from statistical declarations submitted by companies. Statistics on imports are compiled according to country of origin and country of consignment along with statistics on exports according to country of destination.

B. Historical evolution of the national data collection system and policies on data collection

The origins of a statistical organisation in Finland goes back to the year 1748, when Finland was under Swedish rule and the Tables Office (Tabellverket) was founded in Sweden for the purpose of keeping population statistics. In 1865, an independent Statistical Office of Finland was set up, which continued to operate until 1971, when the Office was renamed Statistics Finland.

The first migration statistics were collected in 1883 on the basis of passport catalogues, continuing up until 1984. Nowadays, the Population Register Centre delivers the updated data on migration within and between municipalities and across the Finnish territorial boundaries to Statistics Finland.

In the 1960s the progress of data processing made the founding of various registers possible, which enabled fast processing of large amounts of information. In 1962, the Central Pension Security Institute (*Eläketurvakeskus*) formed a register where all beneficiaries of employment pensions were given an employment pension number (*työeläkekortin numero*) consisting of the date of birth and its verification part. This personal identity number was introduced extensively in 1964 due to the statutory health insurance policy in Finland. From 1964 to 1970, The National Pensions Institute along with the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (*Kela*) could issue personal identity numbers. All people permanently living in Finland were issued a social security number (*sosiaaliturvatunnus*) and their information was stored in the Social Insurance Institution register.

In 1969, the Population Register Centre (*Väestörekisterikeskus*) was founded, and in 1971, the Centre was appointed solely in charge of issuing personal identity numbers. The personal identity number consists of 11 characters, the first part indicating the date (13), month (10) and year (52) of birth e.g. 131052-308T. The code remains unchanged throughout the person's life. The processing of personal data is subject to the provisions of the Personal Data Act, which came into effect on June 1999. The Personal Data Act requires that register descriptions are produced and made publicly available for all registers of people. Also, the Act allows subsequent use of personal data derived from diverse administrative registers for statistical purposes.

Today the Population Register Centre maintains the Population Information System (previously the Population Register) in cooperation with local register offices. The Population computer-based register was introduced in 1971 and four years later the Population Register Centre started to centrally collect information. Previously, register keepers had sent the information directly to the Central Statistical Office, but after the renewal the Population Register Centre forwarded magnetic tapes to Statistics Finland. Nowadays, there are some two thousand organizations which produce maintenance data for the population information system. The system is updated every weekday.

The Population Information System contains basic identifiable information about Finnish citizens and foreign citizens residing permanently in Finland. The Population Register Centre has the statutory duty to provide information; information is received from citizens and from various public authorities. Since November 1980, data in the Population Information System about construction projects subject to licence has been obtained directly from municipalities. Also, building information is maintained and checked in cooperation with municipal building supervision authorities and local register offices. The Population Information Act (507/1993) and Population Information Decree (886/1993) define the duty of municipal building supervision authorities to issue notification of construction projects and regulate provisions on the maintenance of real estate information. The real estate information in the Population Information System is maintained with the help of the cadastral register of the National Land Survey of Finland.

In 1980, the population and housing census relied increasingly on data obtained directly from different registers. In the 1980s various administrative registers became so reliable that they could be utilised for population censuses. By 1985, various administrative registers were used to an increasing extent in the population and housing census. The last domicile registration takes place in 1989.

In the 1990s, the fast development of data processing technology made it possible for administrative registers to offer functional data system services for the compilation of statistics. The Population Census of 1990 was the first census based solely on different administrative registers. Demographic features of the population, such as age, gender, marital status and domicile have been available from the Central Population Register since 1969, whereas information on people's economic activity had to be collected from the persons themselves until 1985. Such information included main type of activity, status in employment, occupation and industry.

In the 21st century the most important registers used for census purposes are: the Population Information System (previously the Central Population Register), the Tax Administration's registers, the employment relationship registers of the Central Pension Institute, the State Treasury and municipal pension institutes, Statistics Finland's Register of Enterprises and Establishments, the Social Insurance Institution's pension register, various student registers, the Ministry of Labour's register of job applicants, Statistics Finland's Register of Completed Education and Degrees, and the conscript register of the General Staff of the Armed Forces. Totally there are about 30 different administrative registers used.

Nowadays, almost all population census data can be produced every year due to the register-based population census.

C. Coordination and linking

Statistics Finland's role is to combine collected data to produce statistics and information services for the needs of society. Data is most often collected from registers and Statistics Finland acts as "a central collector." There is a close collaboration between register authorities and Statistics Finland. State authorities have a statutory obligation to supply data from the information in their possession and enterprises, municipal organisations and non-profit institutions are obliged to supply data on matters separately prescribed in law. Registers are the main source of data, but Statistics Finland also derives data by direct data collection (face-to-face and telephone interviews, postal or electronic inquiries).

The most central registers in statistic production are as follows:

- The Population Information System (former: the Central Population Register)
- Tax Administration Register (e.g. The Customer Register of Taxation, Payment Control Register, taxation registers, the Trade Registration Code Register)
- Register of Enterprises and Establishments
- Register of Completed Education and Degrees
- The State Treasury and municipal pension institutes' Register
- The Employment Relationship Registers of the Central Pension Institute
- The Social Insurance Institution's pension register
- Various student registers
- The Ministry of Labour's register of job applicants (the Ministry of Labour merged into the Ministry of Employment and the Economy in 2008)
- The Conscript Register

The major factor in Finland, which enables the statistical use of administrative data records, is the application of unified identification systems across different sources. The personal identity code makes it possible to combine register information. Statistics Finland can link statistical units to one another by means of the identification systems to produce statistics. For example, in practice it is possible to

combine almost any data with a migration or integration related variable. Also, registers are generally available in machine readable format, which means that they can be processed using computers. A basic requirement according to data use is that each unit in the register can always be unequivocally identified. The easiest way to process the data is if the register has the system of identification codes (e.g. personal identity code, real estate identifier). When the personal identity number is written into some data processing system, it is always verified first. In case the number is incorrect, the remainder always gives an error notification. In such instances, there must be an error in the date of birth, the running number or the check character. This verification ensures that different systems have correct information about people.

In addition, a register source system enables regular updating considering all relevant units. New units entering the target population are regularly added to the register (e.g. newborns, immigrants). Those exiting the target population are removed or moved to history information from the register. Many registrars do not delete any units, but the old data remains in registers. Also, the data describing the units may change and therefore have to be updated as well. For instance, the responsibility for updating the population information system remains mainly with the authorities.

For example, register-based population censuses are drawn in Finland by exploiting around thirty administrative and statistical data files. In population censuses the units are linked to one another through personal identity codes and domicile codes. In addition, data on people's workplace are linked to data on companies' establishments, along with company trade registration codes and the use of addresses (see figure 1).

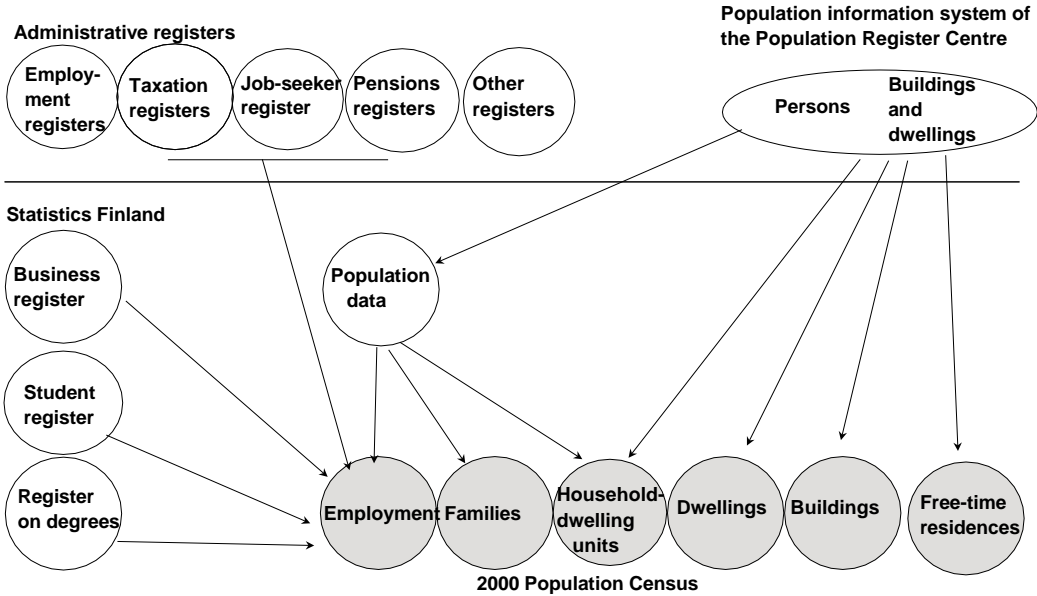


Figure 1. Sources for Population Census (Source: Statistics Finland, 2000)

D. Concepts and definitions

Migration statistics describe the moving of individual people. The statistical unit is move (not migrant), which is why a person may appear in one year's statistics several times. Temporary moves are not included in the statistics on migration.

Migrant is a general concept, which refers to all migrants with different reasons for moving, e.g. emigrant or immigrant. Based on the Population Data Act 507/1993, persons who have moved to Finland and intend to reside or have resided one whole year without interruption in Finland shall inform the register office of their place of residence. For those who have a residence permit the place of domicile is generally determined according to the same principles as for Finnish nationals (Act on the Municipality of Domicile 201/1994) and they are counted among the usual resident population regardless of their nationality. Details recorded, of permanent residents living in Finland, in the Population Information System include name, date of birth, citizenship, family relations and address. Foreign citizens are also issued a personal identity code on the basis of their registration. Appointing a personal identity number for foreigners enables combining different statistical data and more research data on foreigners living in Finland.

Finnish citizens changing place of domicile are expected within one week of the move to report on the change of address, specifying all family members involved in the move. On the grounds of the Decree on the Municipality of Domicile 351/1994, people emigrating abroad shall also supply a notice of change of address, just as do those that migrate within the country. The notice of removal is delivered to the register office of the new place of residence. The move is indicated as either a permanent or a temporary one, and when the register office receives the notice, the register office determines whether the nature of the move involves a permanent or temporary change of domicile. Change of residence information is entered in the Population Information System from which the new address information will then be transferred to other administrative files on the basis of the personal identity code. Those who intend to leave the country for more than one year are primarily considered emigrants (Act on the Municipality of Domicile 201/1994). However, a person may keep their municipality of residence in Finland, if he or she has a stronger connection to Finland than to the new country of residence based on his or her living conditions. The Finnish staff of Finland's embassies and trade missions abroad and persons serving in the UN peacekeeping forces are counted among the resident population.

Since 1994, when the Act on the Municipality of Domicile (201/1994) came into effect, students moving due to their studies have had the right to register themselves as permanent residents in the municipality of their place of study. *Place of residence* in population structure statistics refers to the location of the dwelling in which the person was registered on the last day of the year.

Country of birth is indicated for all persons entered in the Population Register. Country of birth is determined on the basis of the mother's permanent home country at the time of birth. This means, for example, that the country of birth of Estonian immigrants born before Estonian independence is the Soviet Union. Similarly, the

country of birth of people who were born in areas that Finland has subsequently ceded is Finland even though the area no longer is Finnish territory. Therefore, the country of birth is indicated according to the form of government at the time of birth. Since 1999, country of birth has been classified according to ISO standards. Statistics Finland's own classifications were used prior to this.

Citizenship which equivalent to nationality is described in statistics on the structure of the population and vital statistics as well as *native language*. Also, data on foreign citizens is included, in case they are permanently residing in Finland. Since 1999, country of citizenship and language has been classified according to ISO standards. Statistics Finland's own classifications were used prior to this. Citizenship refers to a legislative bond between an individual and the State and defines the individual's status in the State. According to the Nationality Act, 359/2003, citizenship also defines the basic rights and duties existing between the individual and the State. Citizenship does not necessarily tell whether the person is of foreign origin or not. A good way to examine the foreign population is by language. A mother language defines the language spoken at home and is not considered to change quickly over time. Language data is also available from many population data sources.

Data on *religious community* are derived from the Population Information System. Data on religious communities are considered as very sensitive and can be only released by region on religious communities with at least five cases and by municipality on those with at least ten cases. The statistics of members in *religious communities* vary between Statistics Finland and The Population Register Centre. According to the Population Register Centre, there are more "unreligious" people in Finland than according to Statistics Finland. This difference is due to the way data is entered for newborn babies: Statistics Finland categorizes babies' religion through mother's religion, while the Population Register Centre leaves the data section of babies blank.

The concept of ethnic background refers to a person belonging to a certain group of people (in Finland, e.g. Ingrian Finn, Kurd, Romany, Swedish speaking Finns), but who is not or has not necessarily been a citizen of his or her country of residence. Ethnicity is also included in the registers on asylum seekers, but it is used for the purpose of the asylum procedure and only certain authorities have access to these registers.

E. Availability of data

E.1. Core demographic data on immigrants and migration control

E.1.a Population stocks and general demographic data

Statistics Finland produces the most of the population statistics. The statistics on the structure of the population describe Finnish and foreign citizens permanently residing in Finland at the turn of the year. The Official Statistics of Finland announce the amount of the population with a foreign background. The Official Statistics contain data on the population's place of residence, age, native language, nationality and

country of birth, as well as on the spouse, children and parents of an individual person. The statistics also contain data on marriages or divorces. The Advisory Board of Official Statistics of Finland is a centre stage for National Statistics, as its' operation is coordinated by Statistics Finland.

The population statistics of Population Register Centre data are classified by Finnish and foreign citizens, but citizenships are not given. In general, migration related data on the flows and stock of immigrants are received from the Population Information System. Also, it is possible to use Census information for compiling statistics on immigration and foreign citizens in Finland.

E.1.b Migration flows and characteristics of migrants at the time of migration

Statistics on migration are based on the population information system maintained by the Population Register Centre. The statistics differentiate moves across the Finnish territorial boundaries (immigration and emigration, and internal moves within the country). These moves are further classified into moves between and within municipalities. In migration statistics, the age, gender, marital status, native language, country of birth and region of arrival and departure of migrants are included in the data. The data describes the situation on the day of the move. Data is available on the country of departure and arrival for immigration and emigration and on the municipality of departure and arrival for internal migration. There is also data available from different areas: between regions and sub-regional units. Temporary moves are not included in the statistics on migration. A person may appear in one year's statistics several times because the statistical unit is 'move'.

E.1.c Legal status of immigrants

The Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) produces information services for international needs and maintains the Register of Aliens. Migri decides on matters related to residence and issues statistics on applications and decisions made on applications for residence permits. Migri grants residence permits to foreigners who come to Finland, including students, employed persons, self-employed persons, returnees and family members of foreigners living in Finland. A citizen of an EEA country has the right to reside in Finland without a residence permit, if the work doesn't last for more than three months. In case the employment contract is longer than the three month period, the employee must obtain a residence permit. A residence permit is automatically granted to EU citizens who have a job or study right in Finland. Citizens of EU countries (also EEA countries and Swiss), who move to Finland for over three months, have to register at the city police department and local register office of their locality of residence.

Below are listed residence permits granted to an alien for reasons other than travel or equivalent short-term stay:

- Residence permit for an employed person
- Residence permit for a self-employed person
- Residence permit for studies

- Residence permit on the basis of family ties
- Permanent residence permit
- Fixed-term residence permit
- Continuous residence permit
- Temporary residence permit

E.1.d Change of citizenship and multiple nationalities

Citizenship refers to a person's legal nationality in a certain country and citizenship is usually determined at birth, or later by adoption. Citizenship can be received automatically also when one parent of a child is Finnish or if the newborn child of foreign citizens cannot automatically have his parents' nationality. The right to acquire Finnish citizenship by declaration applies only to certain groups of people such as children of Finnish citizens, former Finnish citizens or Nordic citizens. To acquire Finnish citizenship upon application, a person must be over 18, have a permanent residence in Finland for a sufficient amount of time and command of the Finnish, Swedish or Finnish Sign Language(s). Yet, there are some integrity requirements and proof of identity is required. An application for Finnish citizenship must be submitted to the local police in Finland.

The Nationality Act, which came into effect in 2003 replacing the 1968 Nationality Act, accepts multiple nationalities. In Finnish population statistics a foreign citizen with a multiple nationality is counted by the nationality of the passport used when entering the country. In such circumstances, when one of the citizenships is Finnish a person will be entered in the statistics as Finnish national. Statistics Finland produces naturalization statistics based on data derived from the Population Register Centre's Population Information System maintained by Administrative Courts. Naturalization statistics describe the foreign citizens permanently resident in Finland who have been granted Finnish nationality during the statistical year. Statistics contain demographic data on recipients such as age, gender, marital status, native language, former nationality, country of birth and year of marriage. Persons who are permanently living abroad at the time of the granting of citizenship are not included in the statistics.

E.1.e Asylum seeking and refugees

The Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) produces statistics e.g. on residence permits, asylum and refugees and citizenship. Information is given by country of birth and citizenship. Also, the Employment Office provides statistics on refugee reception. For example, the statistic "Resettlement of refugees to municipalities" (*kiintiöpakolaiset*) includes the citizenship variable. Occasionally, the Ministry of the Interior, the Finnish Refugee Council and the Refugee Advice Centre announce refugee related statistics.

Asylum seekers are not counted among the resident population until his/her application has been approved. Therefore asylum seekers are not included in population stock statistics, however, refugees with a legal domicile and quota refugees are included in population statistics.

E.1.f Irregular migration

The Register of Aliens is a register of persons, which is maintained and used, e.g. for the control of matters relating to the entry into and departure from Finland as well as for residence and work in Finland. The register contains six sub-registers and the main controllers of it are the Finnish Immigration Service and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The register is also maintained and used by the police, The Frontier Guard and Customs, who collect data e.g. on refusal of entries, entries without travelling documents, asylum seekers on the border and inner land and deportations. Estimates for illegal immigrants are problematic because measuring illegal immigration is difficult.

E.2. Measuring integration, discrimination and diversity

Large-scale foreign net immigration is a new phenomenon in Finland. Under the circumstances, there has not been a long tradition for the need of research on the integration or diversity of the foreign population. Moreover, a relatively small number of immigrants in Finland can make production of statistics and surveys on specific features of foreigners problematic. In general, a small population can mean that there are not many people belonging to particular groups (e.g. religion, belief, opinion). This factor is challenging from the aspect of research. For example, data on sensitive themes, such as integration, discrimination and diversity can sometimes be released by region only, if there are enough cases (more than five or ten). So far, there is no statistical information available on discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin because in Finland residents are not classified by ethnic origin. Finnish legislation denies classification by ethnic terms. However, this research in question can be conducted e.g. by language and nationality. Also, integration research can be conducted by means of explaining factors, such as employment, economic situation and social and living conditions of the resident foreign population. The Employment Office provides statistics on employment of immigrants (registered foreign job-seekers) under the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The Labour Court provides information on judgements concerning employment. As such, the statistics of foreign job applicants, according to citizenship, are compiled monthly.

Finland's membership in the European Union as of 1995 increased the international element in Finnish statistics production. For example, many kinds of integration, discrimination and diversity data are required in order to comply with a Regulation of the European Union. The Finnish League for Human Rights (*Ihmisoikeusliitto*) publishes research reports and other documents related to discrimination and diversity in Finland. These include, for example, the Human Rights Report (*Ihmisoikeusraportti*) and an annual research report on racism and discrimination (*Rasismi ja etninen syrjintä Suomessa*).

The concept of 'ethnic minority' is used in policies regarding minorities in Finland, while it is not used in statistics. The Non-Discrimination Act bans discrimination on the basis of age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. There

are also other bans on discrimination, e.g. in the acts on employment relationships. The Ombudsman for Equality supervises compliance with the Act on Equality and publishes related material. Also, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health puts out publications under the topic of equality. In addition, the Court of Justice decisions are available. Judgements on discrimination can be read in FINLEX, which is an internet database of Finnish legislative information (<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/oikeus/kko/> and <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/oikeus/kho/> and <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/oikeus/tt/>).

Participation in political parties and associations reflects integration and commitment to society, which can be studied in Finland by combining different data sources. Statistics Finland produces political participation related data on the results of general elections, persons entitled to vote, voting, candidates and the elected. These statistics themselves don't include any migration related variables. The Population Register Centre establishes a register of eligible voters (a voting register) based on the Population Information System. In this context, it is possible to compose migration related statistics on political participation.

Statistics on social protection contain information on the expenditure and financing of social and health care, social protection benefit recipients and amounts, along with social and health care services and their producers. The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) produces information related to health on the basis of its' registers. For example, THL collects care reporting data on institutional and housing services in social care. The nature of this kind of data is often confidential, which is why data on more detailed variables is not publicly available, but publications with comprehensive statistical information are published regularly. Also, Statistical Reports released by THL are freely available. In addition, both the Finnish Centre for Pensions and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland provide statistics under the topic of social protection.

The Federation of Accident Insurance Institutions is responsible for the collection and maintenance of statistics on work accidents and occupational diseases. Statistics Finland receives the data from accident insurance institutions for compiling its' statistics on occupational accidents. In addition, the labour market produces health related statistics, such as occupational accident statistics.

Statistics Finland produces data, which describes human relationships, welfare, quality of life, social participation and security. Data on living conditions also includes statistics concerning different population groups, including Statistics Finland's data collections concerning households (Income and living conditions survey, Time use survey). In 2003, a survey was published concerning living conditions of immigrants in Finland (*Maahanmuuttajien elinolotutkimus 2002*).

Statistics Finland's Household Budget Survey (HBS) is used to establish what households spent money on in Finland. The data content of the HBS is based on national and international recommendations and classifications.

Statistics Finland (OSF) provides housing statistics. The statistics on household-dwelling units and housing conditions are produced annually. All persons residing permanently in the same dwelling make a household-dwelling unit. Housing conditions are described by such variables as form of tenure, type of building,

number of rooms and equipment of dwelling, as well as by structure and stage in life of the household-dwelling unit as well as age of its members. There are also statistics concerning the living conditions of different population groups.

F. Quality and scope of data collection

In Finland, the Statistics Act regulates the compilation of statistics and there are also established quality criteria for official statistics. Such criteria require that a quality description is attached to all statistical publications. This procedure allows end-users to determine whether the concerned statistics are suited to their purposes. In addition, the ESS requires statistical authorities to fill strict quality and reliability requirements at both the national and community levels. Generally, in Finland, the European Statistical System (ESS) is well promoted as there has been an implementation of measures to meet European standards.

Finland relies on administrative data sources for purposes of statistics production and it has a long experience in the area of register-based statistics production. From a migration data perspective, registers and databases, especially the Population Information System, contain the most important demographic data for units, such as age, sex, marital status, place of residence, number of children, nationality, etc., which can be utilised in compiling the Population Statistics in Finland. The Population Register Centre collects data from various public authorities and uses personal identity numbers to combine data. A personal identity number is an identification that is more specific than a name and it is issued to children born in Finland and to people immigrating permanently to Finland. There may be other people with exactly the same name, but there are no two persons with exactly the same personal identity code.

The benefit of having various register sources for statistical purposes is that a researcher is not bound to the rules set by statisticians. The usage of aggregated data can sometimes bring limitations into the research, but registers enable to utilize more background factor. However, these registers allow for the use of greater background information. Registers obtain updated and reliable information on Finnish population but do not always deliver the complete required data. For example, in Finland, there are a lot of returnees who are former Finnish citizens, such as the Swedish Finns, who are of Finnish origin. The latter are Finnish by nationality, but they are not Finnish citizens. So, using the variable "country of birth" can mean, in some situations, that the picture drawn of foreign population in Finland is not totally realistic. Therefore, it is important to know the concepts and classifications used in the statistics.

Finnish statistics can also differ from one another. One example is the difference between the unemployment figures published by Statistics Finland and the Ministry of Labour. Statistics Finland's target is to produce an internationally comparable unemployment figure, whereas the Ministry of Labour keeps records on the clients of employment offices. Also, international comparisons between statistics can be complex as it is difficult to describe different kinds of societies with similar concepts.

G. Accessibility of data

The official data in Finland is mainly derived from different administrative registers, and registers can be obtained for research purposes. Register data include mainly confidential information and only data from some registers can be passed on with personal identification numbers (PINs). In order to obtain register data for research purposes permission from the register controller is needed. Information on applying for permission and about possible applications forms can be obtained directly from the register controller. However, most authorities do not have application forms and guidelines in English on how to apply for access to data. The Finnish Information Centre for Register Research (ReTki) offers information on national registers and the use of registers in research (<http://retki.stakes.fi>).

In Finland, large amounts of statistical information are accessible to everyone on the website of the Statistics Finland (www.stat.fi) or on other institutions' websites. The Population Register Centre (www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi) releases aggregate data on population and it is possible to use its national base register, Population Information System, for research purposes. The usage requires an authorisation from the Population Register Centre.

Information on migration can be searched in the Statistics Finland's free of charge statistics database, the StatFin service, under the subject area "population". The service provides a possibility to choose variables and to process the data in different forms, such as Excel files. The service is available in three languages (Finnish, Swedish and English), but for English users the content is limited. In addition, there are chargeable statistics databases available in Finnish. More precise search request for the information on the migration related unit (immigration and emigration by country of exit and entry, age, gender and areas where the immigrants have moved to) can be done through Statistics Finland. Data request are produced by combining data files and the cost usually depends on the time and work spent on the process.

The statistics concerning population stocks and general demographic characteristics, including for example, citizenship and country of birth are found in Official Statistics of Finland, which is a collection of regularly published statistics and publication series by Statistics Finland. Statistics Finland produces the most of population statistics. Statistics can be found under the topic "Population." The Population series (*Väestösarja*) covers statistics on the size and structure of the permanently resident population and related changes: births, deaths, marriages, migration, employment, families and household-dwelling units, as well as population projections by area are also produced under this topic. The country of origin, either by country of birth or by country of citizenship, is available for Finland for the stock of immigrants. The stock of residents with a foreign background can be examined by using statistics on naturalization.

In Finland, the most significant share of statistics is included in Official Statistics of Finland (OSF). Statistics Finland's website contains a list of Official Statistics and

part of the OSF statistics can be found on the web pages from Statistics Finland's StatFin service. Also, all the released data by OSF (e.g. population, labour) are available in the Library of Statistics, which is a unit of Statistics Finland. The Library of Statistics maintains the WebStat database. In the Webstat database it is possible to perform a search by certain topic and country. The searches produce descriptions of the statistics and also links to other Finnish data producers. Most of the official data producers release statistical data on their web pages. Also, many tables and publications are available in electronic form. Finnish Immigrant Service releases aggregate data e.g. on residence permit, asylum and refugees and citizenship on its website. However, this data is limited and some of it is only in Finnish. Statistics on residence permits granted on the basis of work since 2003 can be found on the web site of the Employment and Economic Development Office.

Statistics on population can also be found from the annual publication, Statistical Year Book. Municipalities publish their own statistical yearbooks as well (Helsinki, Tampere, Turku). However, the statistical yearbooks consist of secondary data and the statistics are drawn from OSF and other sources.

Statistics on migration are released on Statistics Finland's website in May, in the paper publication "Population structure and vital statistics by municipality" in June and in the paper publication "Vital statistics" in December.

H. Recommendations

In an international comparison, the quality of the migration data in Finland is sufficient. This does not, however, mean that there are no problems with the data. Flow data is more problematic than stock data. For example, in Finland, information of the country of origin at a region level is not available. Though, it is possible to purchase separate data for analysis from Statistics Finland.

Official Statistics of Finland is the most important resource of data retrieval in Finland. Though, it is not one and the same resource, where you can pick up information considered in no time. Official Statistics of Finland is more of a "statistical bank," which is produced to distribute statistical data. This makes it sometimes challenging to acquire statistical data. It could help, if there were a more unified system to find statistics, especially in the case of migration related data.

Researchers should bear in mind that in Finland there are many data registers of which individual data can be combined with demographic factors of individuals by using the personal identity number. This increases possibilities to analyze relationship of demographic factors and background factors. Statistics Finland can link different data sets for statistical purposes. In practice, there is a possibility of linking migration related variables to any research theme to produce statistics. However, details have to be negotiated with Statistics Finland and naturally there will be some cost for the data considered. Also, there might be legislative obstacles to overcome in order to gain access to certain data, because the Statistics Act says, that data received from administrative records are confidential.

Sometimes the legislation can mislead to believe that using registers would be related in doing something dubious, despite of this, register information is worthwhile to use. However, it's important to plan register research carefully in advance, because the use of the register data must be well-justified. Also, studies exclusively based on registers are very large, and different combination of registers may be technically very demanding. Usually, combination of a large amount of register data leads to very high processing costs.

From the perspective of research, there are some deficiencies related to gaining migration statistics, which include:

- information on nationality and citizenship are missing from Population Register data
- schools don't compile statistics of their students according to exit country, country of birth or different languages
- statistics on immigrants are done by citizenship, which does not tell anything about the ethnic background
- statistics are usually chargeable.

Naturally, different registers and statistics go out of date every day and as a consequence, the newest data should be asked for directly from the producer. Also, at other times, researchers might come down to question whether to approach the original data source, which means the particular registrar, or Statistics Finland to receive the information under consideration.

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Appendix

Table 1: Datasets on migration/integration in Finland

Responsible Institution	Dataset	Type of dataset
Statistics Finland	Population Census	Census
	Statistical database of citizenships granted	Count
	Statistical database of migration	Count
	Statistical database of population structure	Count
	Vital statistics	Count
Population Register Centre	Population Information System	Register
STAKES	Database on Finnish Population	Register/Count
	Medical birth register	Register
Kela	Social benefit statistics	Register
Finnish Immigration Service	Register of aliens	Register
Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Employment Service Statistics	Count
	Resettlement of refugees to municipalities	Count
The Finnish Centre for Pensions	Person register	Register