

THE INSTITUTE OF MIGRATION 1974 - 1984



Olavi Koivukangas has served as Director of the Institute of Migration since its beginning. He earned his doctorate in 1972 from the Australian National University, in Canberra, with a dissertation on Scandinavian immigration to Australia. He has written numerous studies and articles on Finnish emigration. His main field of research is Finnish emigration to Australia.

Background and early stages

In the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s, the migratory movements of the population - emigration and internal migration - attracted ever - increasing attention once more everywhere in Finland as an important and large-scale social phenomenon. The unprecedentedly rapid change in the economic structure of the country from agriculture to the manufacturing industries and service trades released manpower from rural areas. Around the same time, the so-called big age classes born in the "baby-boom" years right after the war entered the labor market, often without the benefit of occupational training. There began a shift of population on the one hand to the cities and towns of Finland itself, notably the urban centers of the south, and on the other hand to neighboring Sweden, the vigorously developing industries of which needed workers. The peak year in the Finnish emigration to Sweden was 1970,

when no less than 41,000 persons moved from Finland to Sweden and the total population of this country decreased temporarily as a result of the migratory drain.

Although emigration from Finland had taken place for centuries, research into the matter had been slight and of a random nature in this country before the decade of the 1960s. Much along scholarly lines had been written about emigration, it is true, ever since the last years of the 19th century, but the scholarship was characterized by a certain haphazardness and slight collaboration among researchers. The research situation improved appreciably in 1963, when Anna-Leena Toivonen brought out her academic thesis on overseas emigration from Etelä-Pohjanmaa (South Finnish Bothnia) in 1867-1930 and the research project on emigration to distant lands from Finland got under way under the direction of Professor Vilho Niitemaa at the Department of General History of the University of Turku.

It was largely the magnitude of the Finnish emigration to Sweden that was the central reason for the setting up in 1970 by the Government of The Emigration Commission (SAN) to deal with questions relating to emigration and for the undertaking by the Ministry of Labor at the beginning of the 1970s of a comprehensive research project on emigration.

The research work sponsored by both the University of Turku and the Ministry of Labor concentrated, however, on shedding light on particular aspects of migration, namely, emigration to distant lands and emigration to Sweden.

Typical of the research project dealing with long-journey migration under the direction of Professor Niitemaa was a striving to achieve international collaboration. Accordingly, the professor endeavored to obtain research grants for his students to enable them to carry out studies in the United States and other countries where Finnish emigrants had settled.

After I had passed my final examination in general history in 1967 at the University of Turku as a part of the research project on long-journey migration, the Australian National University in Canberra awarded me in 1968 a three-years scholarship to support my research for a thesis dealing with immigration to Australia from the Nordic countries.

After my return to Turku in 1972, I had an opportunity to join the staff of the Department of General History of the University of Turku, which had attracted a number of gifted researchers interested in the subject of migration to work under the direction of Professor Niitemaa. The department had moved from its cramped old quarters on Hämeenkatu to spacious premises in the former barrack area. During

my sojourn in Australia, migration research had explosively expanded and lively collaboration was taking place with research scholars and universities abroad, especially in the United States and Canada.

The expansion of the sphere of interest and the financial difficulties attending the collection of material and the investigative work were probably central factors in the scheme whereby Professor Niitemaa endeavored to develop a more substantial organization than that represented by any special project to support migration research. The objective was some kind of research center, one that would also coordinate collaborative activity with other research institutions, such as, in particular, universities. A favorable stand toward the plan was taken by, among others, **Suomi Seura** / Finland Society, and specifically its president, Minister Rainer von Fieandt, and its executive director, Mr. Tauri Aaltio. For some reason, however, the plan could not get off the ground, partly, perhaps, on account of the cautious attitude taken by the administrators of the University of Turku. Their thinking, again, was probably guided by the scantiness of the privately run university's financial resources.

When the possibilities of expanding the organization in connection with the University of Turku appeared to have led to a dead end, we undertook to seek some other solution. We mapped out the research situation in the other Finnish universities and learned that the research dealing with migratory movements had increased greatly, which meant that the need for collaboration and coordination of activity was obvious. After this pilot mapping operation, representatives of **the University of Turku** and **Åbo Akademi** (the local Swedish institution of higher education) turned in the summer of 1973 to then Minister of Education Marjatta Väänänen. In the memorandum delivered to the ministry, it was pointed out that research into migratory movements was an ever-growing field of inquiry and measures were proposed for the establishment of an institute to promote such research.

The central task of the new institute was seen to be serving as a connecting link between bodies conducting research in different quarters and the organs of state concerned with issues involving migration. The city of Turku was recommended as the domicile of the planned institute, for migration had for a long time been a field of inquiry in the institutions of learning located there, and good and effective relations with research centers active in the same field abroad had already been established by the local researchers.

The ministry's having taken a favorable stand in the matter, we proceeded to enter discussions with Professor Niitemaa in the autumn of 1973 and with organizations interested in migration and its study, such as **Suomi-Seura**, **Väestöliitto** (= Population League), etc., as well

as with state authorities, Turku city officials and institutions of higher education, starting at the turn of the year. The majority of the bodies we contacted expressed willingness to join the foundation to be set up and tentatively promised to donate a suitable sum of money to the initial fund. The city of Turku joined the founding group. Joining from the Swedish side were the **Central Federation of Finnish Societies in Sweden** and the **Immigrantinstitutet**. A foundation was deemed to suit organizational requirements better than an association.

The founding meeting of the Foundation of the Institute of Migration was held in the consistory of the University of Turku on March 15, 1974. Good coordination and collaboration with the research project sponsored by the University of Turku in the field of long-journey migration are shown by the fact that when Mr Reino Kero presented his doctoral thesis the next day, quite a few of the founding members of the new institute attended the presentation.

Present at the meeting on March 15, 1974, were 34 persons representing institutions of higher education and various associations. In his opening speech, Professor Niitemaa stressed the importance of collaboration between universities and research institutes and the surrounding community to enable the powers that be to obtain the most reliable possible information in laying plans and making decisions. The speaker also emphasized the importance of the new institute in research collaboration on an international scale. Professor Jorma Pohjanpalo, vice president of **Suomi-Seura**, was elected chairman of the founding meeting and Dr. Olavi Koivukangas, secretary. The name to be given the institute was the subject of lively discussion. Among the names proposed were **Siirtolaisuuden Tutkimussäätiö** (Foundation for Emigration Research) and **Muuttoliiketutkimuskeskus** (Migration Research Center). Most support, however, was given Mr. Jaakko Itälä's proposal, **Siirtolaisuusinstituutti**, the English version of which eventually became the present "Institute of Migration." Academician Eino Jutikkala, the historian, proposed further that the bylaws would state that by **migration** is also meant migratory movements inside the country's boundaries.

The following charter of foundation was adopted:

"In order to support endeavors to study emigration and other migratory movements, to publicize the results, to coordinate and make known research activity connected with emigration and to develop international collaboration in these branches of inquiry, the undersigned have established a foundation, the name of which shall be **Siirtolaisuusinstituutti - Migrationsinstitutet / Institute of Migration.**"

The donations made by the founding members amounted to

Mk 98,000, of which subsequently the sum of Mk 50,000 was invested in the form of capital shares in the foundation and the balance was reserved as operating capital.

Finally, the founding meeting elected a provisional Council composed of representatives of 21 collective bodies under the chairmanship of Professor Jorma Pohjanpalo. The Council held its first meeting immediately after its election and appointed an Administrative Board, which at its organizing session elected Professor Vilho Niitemaa as chairman and invited Dr. Olavi Koivukangas to serve as agent for the foundation and director of the institute.

At its meeting in May 1974, the board appointed to the post of bureau secretary Maija-Liisa Kalhama, B.A. After two small rooms attached to the library of the Department of General History had been set aside in the summer of 1974 for the use of the institute, it was able to begin work on August 1, 1974 - the very same day that the private University of Turku was converted into a state institution. The official opening of the institute took place on Aug. 20 of the same year.

The Starting of Operations

The work of the Institute of Migration started with the functional mapping out of the field of operations; this was done by sending a letter of inquiry to organizations and researchers in Finland aimed at forming a picture of the research situation. Also the assembling of a library collection was promptly begun, along with publishing activity in the framework of series of books. In the first year, the dissertations of Reino Kero and Olavi Koivukangas appeared in the English-language series. In the autumn, there came out the first issue of the periodical **Siirtolaisuus-Migration**, which has since then appeared four times a year. Attention was also given from the beginning to the development of international collaboration. For the purpose of making direct contacts and strengthening former relations, the director of the institute visited Immigration Research Centers in the United States and Canada in January 1975. People turned to the new institute in all kinds of matters connected with migration; for instance, inquiries were made about relatives living abroad and requests were received from descendants of emigrants for genealogical information. It was endeavored to be of assistance in every case to the extent possible.

The following year, 1975, the institute inaugurated its program of seminar and congress activity by taking part, jointly with Suomi-Seura, in the Finnish Emigrant Congress held in conjunction with the Jyväskylä Summer Festival and by arranging in Turku the first Symposium on

Internal Migration. The institute also took part in a central capacity in the work of the United States Bicentennial Committee, appointed by the Ministry of Education, as a result of which there appeared the book "Old Friends - Strong Ties" saluting the American Bicentennial. Further, an exhibition was put together featuring Finnish emigration to the United States. One set of the exhibits was sent on tour to the United States and another remained in Finland to be made available on different occasions. In the publishing sector, noteworthy was the production of the work titled "The Finnish Experience in the Great Lakes Region," a collection of papers read at the first Finnish - American Conference on Immigration Research, held in Duluth, Minnesota, in 1974.

Central Tasks

Documentation

In pursuing its aims, the Institute of Migration has striven, during its first decade, systematically to improve the conditions necessary for the carrying out of research in the field of migration, making and promoting studies, and acting as a collaborative agency and coordinator in the migration research being done in different quarters.

Actively keeping abreast of migration studies being made in different places is the basis and most important point of departure of the institute's work. This end has been served by the inquiries sent out from time to time from the institute to institutions and individual researchers. These inquiries have laid the basis for a special research register, by drawing on which the institute in 1978 published a bibliography of Finnish emigration and internal migration comprising some 3,500 titles. About 2,000 new publication titles have been entered into the register compiled since then. The register also contains a catalogue of migration studies in progress and it offers a valuable means of advancing research and facilitating collaboration and division of labor among researchers. The production of a new bibliography is bound to come up for consideration in the next few years, along with the computerizing of the data in the register.

In addition to the institute's functioning as a documentation center, the collection of research material and the building up of the library are aimed at improving the conditions under which research work is done in the field of migration.

Noteworthy collections of research material dealing with migratory movements of different kinds have been acquired by the Institute

of Migration. Catalogues and organized collections exceed 400 in number. The material has accumulated mainly through gifts received from both domestic sources and elderly emigrants living abroad and their progeny or emigrant associations. Part of the material contained in the archives has been collected as a result of research activity engaged in by the institute itself (interviews, microfilms, etc.). The material in the archives of the institute is divided into three main categories: donated material, photograph collections and newspaper and magazine clipping collections. Measured in terms of shelf space, the material covers a total shelving length of some 200 meters. The picture collection contains more than 3,000 photographs dealing with migration, arranged by countries of destination. The library of the institute contains nearly 4,000 titles of studies and other publications dealing with emigration and internal migration and the relevant background factors. The library receives all the newspapers and periodicals published by Finnish emigrants abroad as well as a considerable number of foreign scientific periodicals. The library collection has been acquired mainly by making exchanges using the institute's own publications, including its quarterly magazine. The library is designed primarily to serve readers under its own roof, but loans are also made to outside scholars and students. In addition to literature, the institute has systematically also collected statistical material on emigration and internal migration.

The research register, collections of research material and library comprise the core of the documentation the institute is able to provide.

Information service

Another important function of the institute is disseminating information on migratory movements and the research being done on them. This takes place primarily through the publication of studies dealing with emigration and internal migration. The institute brings out series of publications in the Finnish, Swedish and English languages, in addition to which series in duplicate form are issued of short studies and reports. Many of the studies have been doctoral dissertations. To date, 25 publications have appeared in the institute's series. Since the year 1974, the institute has also published the periodical **Siirtolaisuus-Migration**, a quarterly containing, in addition to topical items and communications, short articles and book reviews.

The seminars and congresses arranged by the institute also constitute an important channel of information and provide forums for scholarly intercourse. In all, the institute has arranged, either alone or

jointly with other organizations, ten seminars, of which several have been of international scope. On the average, one scientific conference a year seems to be a suitable number. The institute has also aspired to bring about a long-term program of seminar activity; for example, it has sought since 1975 to have a symposium on migratory movements meet at five-year intervals to concentrate attention on internal shifts of population. Further, in collaborative research activity carried on with the United States and Canada, it has been aimed to hold at five-year intervals conferences like the one held for the first time in 1974 in Duluth to deal with immigration to North America - and this aim has been achieved. The second FINN FORUM met in Toronto, Canada, in 1979 and the third is convening in Turku in September 1984.

The papers read at the seminars and conferences and the results of the discussions have been published and thereby made generally available. In the future, the seminar program will receive more attention than ever in research collaboration and its significance as a vehicle of information will be underscored.

Connected with the institute's information service is its exhibition activity too, whereby it is sought to make known to the general public the vicissitudes and history of Finnish migratory movements. In 1976, in honor of the United States Bicentennial, an exhibition of photographs dealing with Finnish emigration to America was produced. Two sets were made, of which one was sent to the United States as a touring exhibition and the other was retained as a permanent exhibition on the premises of the Institute of Migration. In 1980, a large-scale exhibition was put together dealing with Finnish emigration to Sweden throughout history. The exhibition was set up in six different communities in Sweden and attracted a total of more than 100,000 visitors. A new printing of the publication issued in connection with the exhibition has come out, and it has been used in, for instance, Swedish schools and by study circles. In Finland, the exhibition has been on display also in six localities, and it is now open to the public in reduced form on the premises of the institute. The third permanent exhibition produced by the institute consists of photographs dealing with Finnish emigration to Australia; it was put together in 1982. The exhibitions have to an increasing extent attracted the attention of tourists and school groups. The development of exhibition activity has been restricted, however, by the limited space available in the already cramped headquarters of the institute. In addition to these primary exhibitions, the institute has participated in the arranging of various exhibitions concentrating on special themes in connection with, for instance, conferences.

In accordance with the original idea of scientific collaboration, attention has been concentrated on the general promotion and coordination of research work. The reason for this is that the institute has not had either the financial or other means to undertake research projects on its own. Promoting and coordinating the research dealing with migration in general have therefore dominated its activity. It came to light, however, that certain questions pertaining to emigration and internal migration were not being given attention anywhere or that social planners and decision makers needed to obtain information fast. It was at a time when the migration research project of the Ministry of Labor was about to be finished - but still needed to fill informational gaps. Related projects in the sphere of applied research were started in 1977, one example being an investigation, financed by the Finnish and Swedish Ministries of Labor, of the migration of workers to Sweden outside the jurisdiction of the employment bureaus.

The Central Bureau of Statistics took part in a broad study undertaken in 1980 on funds provided by the Academy of Finland to construct a composite picture of the internal migrant. Characteristic of the research activity of the institute has been, on the one hand, tackling timely problems and, on the other, collaboration with various quarters as well as arranging financial support for particular projects. Thus the study on the emigrants returning to Finland from Sweden in 1980-1981 was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and the Housing Administration. In 1983, a new project, known as the Repatriated Child Project, was undertaken for the purpose of investigating the adjustment to conditions in the Finnish comprehensive school system of children who had returned from Sweden and determining how well they were doing in their studies. The study is a Finnish-Swedish co-project, with an investigator from each country participating and the costs being borne by both sides equally. Four students are also taking part, their reports being designed to be submitted for academic credit.

The scope of the research engaged in by the institute ranges from internal migratory movements to emigration to Australia and New Zealand. In 1978, a research project dealing with Scandinavian emigration to Australia and New Zealand was started jointly with the **Emigrantinstitutet** based in Växjö, Sweden with the financial support of, among others, the Nordic Cultural Foundation. As a participant in the project, I was given the opportunity to do research in Australia for three months in 1981.

The institute's future research activity will depend, on the one

hand, on the needs of the society, and, on the other, on the available resources. There are great advantages to working on a project basis, and this will continue and evidently increase also along the lines of international collaboration. Finnish emigration and along with it also the dominant research sector would appear to fall in the future as well in the Scandinavian sphere.

International Collaboration

Inasmuch as the phenomenon of emigration is international by its very nature, it goes without saying that the international point of view must be of central importance also in relevant research. Ever since it was founded, the institute has sought to establish collaboration and the exchange of information with institutions and researchers in other countries. In the sphere of international collaboration, special mention should be made of the formal agreement of collaboration concluded with the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, in 1976. To an increasing extent, in joint action with the Ministry of Education, research facilities have been accepted and offered to foreign recipients of scholarships and research grants. What I consider to be especially important, however, is the opening up of opportunities for Finnish emigration researchers to do research work in universities and research institutes abroad. The exchange of research scholars could take place both on the basis of programs of exchange between states and by developing collaborative projects. Attention should be paid to the matter of having researchers sent to the United States and Canada, above all, with the yield of a notable endowment received from the United States, for instance, being used for this purpose.

Administration and Organization

The Institute of Migration has been established in the form of a foundation, the administrative organs of which are the Council and the Administrative Board. The institute receives its operating funds from the state as an annual discretionary grant-in aid, in addition, funds are solicited from different sources to finance different projects. Special mention should be made of the donation of \$ 100,000 made in 1982 by the 90-year-old Finnish-American Kaarle Hjalmar Lehtinen to support the work of the institute. The permanent staff comprises four regular employees. Counting project workers and temporary employees, the personnel of the institute numbers annually about ten on the

average. The institute at first occupied rooms provided by the University of Turku, and since 1981 it has rented space in premises owned and renovated by the city of Turku on a historical street named Piispankatu.

The Future

For the past ten years, the Institute of Migration has taken active part in collaborative Finnish and international research work. The biggest problems confronting it are obtaining additional space for, in especial, the holding of exhibitions and the general difficulty of getting financial support for scientific research projects. On account of the increase in the quantity of data and incoming inquiries, the institute will probably be obliged to switch over to the automatic data processing system in the next few years. New challenges have to be faced by the institute as increasing numbers of requests are received for genealogical information.

Working in collaboration with its friends both at home and abroad, the Institute of Migration faces its second decade of existence with confidence.