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A CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE TO MULTILEVEL IMMIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN EUROPE: ANALYSING THE FINNISH CASE USING THE 2015 MIGRATION CRISIS.

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ABSTRACT

The motivation for this study emanates from the limited research on immigration governance in Finland and the concentration of scholarly studies on the integration of immigrants. There has been a vast and varied body of research on immigration and asylum policies. However, few have examined the governance of immigration in Finland, particularly its relationship with the EU in governing immigration, from a constructivist lens. Governing immigration involves institutions and actors that make policy decisions and implement them at diverse levels within a complex and dynamic setting, regularly and during crises. This research project also explored the regular and crises governance of immigration (namely the 2015-2016 migration crisis) in the context of the return directive (deportation of asylum-seekers to third countries). This study, hence, applies the social constructivism theory in analysing and explaining how different institutions and actors in Finland collaborate at the local and national levels and between Finland and the EU-level institutional actors. In this context, constructivism refers to the idea that social and political realities are socially constructed through the interactions between diverse actors and that norms, beliefs, and identities play a crucial role in shaping policy decisions and implementation outcomes. Thus, the study examines how immigration policies and practices in Europe are influenced and implemented at multiple levels of governance using the case of Finland. This qualitative research answers two main research questions by analysing official documents and elite interviews using the Framework Analysis and the case study mentioned above. The study employed a purposive sampling technique in recruiting the elites for interviews on their institutions' behalf. In order to triangulate the document data, sixteen different elites from the three multilevels were interviewed from various institutions.

The research's main finding is that many factors facilitate and inhibit immigration governance activities in Finland, for instance, Finland's culture of mutual trust, understanding and cooperation among the governing actors. Also, the domestic tension within Finland's governance institutions arising from the popularity of the Finns party coupled with the Finnish approach to EU decision-making makes Finland's interaction with the EU on a multilevel complex and dynamic. Finland has a system of always having an already prepared stance on EU issues before any negotiations or deliberations at the EU level. These stances are designed according to the various government programmes, debated and concluded at the Finnish Parliament before being presented at the EU level. This system seems complex, but at the same time, it is practical for Finland since it always goes to the EU prepared. Within this intricate interactive governance process, the constructivist lens explains how and why perspectives, egos, and national policies (redlines and stances) influence the entire multilevel governance process in attaining any meaningful outcomes. Also, this study particularly emphasises interactions between the various actors and institutions before, during and after the 2015-2016 migration crisis within Europe. That is, how Finland and the EU actors and institutions manage immigration regularly and during the 2015-2016 crisis and beyond is depicted using the case of return directive implementation. The 2015 migration crisis was a significant and complex immigration event in Europe, involving a large influx of migrants and refugees. Understanding how Finland responded to this crisis in cooperation with the EU provides valuable insights into its immigration policies and practices.

The study shows that the results of multilevel immigration governance are the outcome of the social constructions of the actors' common and diverse beliefs, norms and identities during their interactions. The notion of trust among Finnish actors reflects the social aspect of governance. Trust is built through social interactions and shared experiences, reinforcing the idea that social relationships influence decision-making and governance processes. Trust among the Finnish actors at the national level reduces tensions in immigration governance.

However, the relationships get more tense and complicated at the EU level, where different Member States export their similar or divergent national interest in various negotiations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEAP	Common European Asylum Policy
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EC	European Commission
EMU	European Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EURA	European Union Readmission Agreement
EURODAC	European Dactyloscopy
FBG	Finnish Border Guards
FIS	Finnish Immigration Service
FRC	Finnish Red Cross
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
IBM	Integrated Border Management
IT	Information Technology
MEAE(TEM)	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
MLG	Multilevel Governance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NIBM	National Integrated Border Management
NPB	National Police Board
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SIS	Schengen Information System
TCN	Third Country National
UN	United Nations
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
VIS	Visa Information System

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0   Background

Scholarly investigations into Finnish immigration governance have thus far been scarce, with a notable gap existing in exploring multilevel interactions among governance actors within Finland and between Finland and the European Union when viewed from a constructivist interpretation. This study is a constructivist analysis of European immigration governance, explicitly examining the phenomenon in the Finnish context. It suggests that the interactive approach of Multilevel Governance (henceforth MLG) should be considered an ideal form of immigration governance between Finland and the EU, which fits well with the constructivist theoretical perspective. Constructivists generally contend that comprehending social action by governments and EU institutions necessitates acknowledging the significance of socialisation into norms and forming identities (Saurugger and Mérand 2010). In exploring the collaborative management of immigration, a combination of constructivist theory and the MLG conceptual framework elucidate the phenomenon across the local, national, and supranational levels (Madsen 2022; Búzás 2006). This approach comprehensively examines the political, material, social, and cultural structures that shape interactions in this context. These structures comprise the understandings, expectations or knowledge creations manifesting in these multilevel interactions and show whether their relationships are mutual or conflicting. The social constructivist theoretical reflections of the study suggest that the outcomes of MLG interactions are socially constructed (Bevir 2009) to fit the nature of the structures of immigration governance in Finland and between Finland and the EU.

Since its introduction in the 1990s by Gary Marks, MLG has gained remarkable popularity among academic literature and enthusiasts of EU studies (Tortola 2017), but very few studies have taken a constructivist dimension in using the framework to examine immigration governance. MLG is regarded today as a benchmark tool for visualising the making of sound policies, decisions and implementation practices within the European political and administrative conclave. As Jeffery and Peterson (2020, p.762) rightly contended, "MLG did not begin as a powerful [conceptual] account but emerged to become one". As much as it is considered relevant in EU politics and polity, it is also gaining ground beyond the EU to other international organisations. For instance, it is being used to conceptualise the understanding of interactive governance in some federal nations (Tortola 2017). This development is a significant advancement in the concept, as many scholars have used it to

depict European integration. However, this study uses the idea to evoke the constructivist theoretical perceptions of immigration governance on a multilevel by various actors. Hence, this research contributes to the use of MLG as a methodological and heuristic tool by analysing immigration governance interactions between the EU and Finland using the constructivist lens. Managing these interactions, solving issues and generating prospects demand clarity in these relationships (Kooiman 2003) and the involvement of the local levels in governance (Heiman et al. 2019). Nowadays, discussions about governance emphasise the benefits of interactive governance and how to facilitate the interactions between the state and society and between the state and other institutional players. This goal is achievable by changing the government structures, reducing red tape, officialising interactions, forming different leadership and management styles, and promoting collaborations (Torfing et al. 2012). Bevir (2009) argues that although these reforms occur, government functionalities are still performed through bureaucratic hierarchies. Understanding why bureaucratic hierarchies persist despite reform efforts is crucial for addressing governance challenges, an underlying reason why this research is significant.

This study also analyses the dynamics and complexities involved in immigration governance of asylum-seekers and refugees in Finland. Heino and Jauhiainen (2020) contend that immigration influences the changes in Finland's asylum-seeker and refugee policies. Schultz et al. (2021, p.764) provided the first comprehensive theoretical account and analysis of how countries combine policies on asylum and labour migration. They highlighted how countries combine two of the "main admission channels, asylum and labour migration, by introducing the concept of the immigration policy mix" (Schultz et al. 2021, p.780). The preceding description underscores a notable absence in the existing literature concerning immigration governance. This study seeks to address this gap by extending the findings of Schultz et al. (2021). Specifically, it endeavours to scrutinise the intricacies and dynamism inherent within the MLG interaction, particularly in the relationships among actors at the national level and their engagements with EU counterparts as they jointly delegate sovereignty to the supranational level.

The current research study assesses routine and crisis-oriented decision-making processes and the subsequent implementation of the return directive concerning asylum-seekers and refugees. It specifically focuses on the unfolding events of the 2015-2016 migration crisis in the EU. The Return directive is crucial in this study because it affects the capacity of the Member States to decide who enters and leaves their territories (Servent 2011). Various scholars (Pryhönen and Wahlbeck 2019; Collett and Le Coz 2018; Paynter 2022; Heimann et al. 2019; Jaoa 2018; Perela and Niemi 2018) have examined the effects of the migration

crisis; however, there is a lack of research on how the crisis impacted the deportation of immigrants from Finland pre-crisis, during and after the crisis. Deportation issues are widely contested in Finland (Pirkkalainen 2021); however, limited scholarly attention has been given to the multilevel nature of the various approaches, especially juxtapositioning how the phenomenon is implemented regularly and in a crisis. Therefore, this study evaluates the interactive decision-making and implementation in addressing the 2015-2016 situation, contrasting it with events before (2010-2015) and after the crisis (2015-2020). Also, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, the lack of attention to Finland's relationship with the EU in routinely implementing the return directive specifically about asylum-seekers and refugees remains a significant gap in literature, which this research addresses. This study, thus, analyses the diverse roles of different actors involved in the MLG of immigration who make and implement these policy decisions as part of addressing the concerns regarding the lack of significant research on the issue. These actors are, for instance, the Finnish Ministry of Interior, the Finnish Police, the EU Commission, the Finnish Permanent Representation to Brussels and the Finnish Border, which were selected purposely for this research. In short, the EU and the Member States encountered numerous challenges in resolving the 2015-2016 migration crisis across all levels of governance. Asylum-seekers, refugees and irregular migrants were blamed for these occurrences. However, as Doomernik and Glorius (2016, p.431) argued, the migration crises were caused by the EU and its Member States' inability to "jointly" confront the necessity of people eligible for international protection.

Migration is not a new human phenomenon. All over the world today, many people decide to leave their homes and townships in search of a safer or better life. Migration is, thus, a term that encompasses various movements and situations involving people from all walks of life and backgrounds. This phenomenon is embedded in trade and cultural exchange and has offered millions worldwide the opportunities to forge safe and meaningful lives abroad (Hughes et al. 2019). Additionally, some move around to change household income risks, for educational and marital purposes (Massey et al. 1993). Economically advanced countries like Australia, the USA, China, New Zealand and some countries within Europe continually attract people from developing and less developed countries. However, large-scale immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon for most European countries, unlike Australia, the US and Canada (Dustmann and Frattini 2011). That is, many European countries have experienced more emigration than immigration. The economic, political, and social conditions in these countries account for the events that lead to immigration tides (Sassen 2014), serving as pull factors and the need to govern the phenomenon.

The essence of immigration governance in the EU emerges from two relevant occurrences. First, the EU has specific arrangements (free movements) for its citizens, which is the ability of Europeans to move freely within Europe, and this is one of the aims of the EU project. The EU Member States are very enthusiastic about their citizens' internal free movements, and this policy has increased cross-border activities among them. With this, they have the privileges of employment, education, livelihood and retirement in another Member State. There is also a need for social, cultural, political, and economic benefits for citizens from more proficient labour markets to improve their cultural exchanges and socialisation (Benton and Petrovic 2013). For instance, the number of working-age EU citizens residing in the other Member States in 2015 alone was roughly 11.3 million (Finnish Ministry of the Interior 2018). However, the EU directive of free movement among the Member States is not absolute. EU citizens who move to another Member State must register with the appropriate authorities if their residence exceeds 90 days. This phenomenon does not present serious immigration governance challenges to the Member States.

In contrast to the EU free movement for its citizens, immigration governance, especially the deportation processes of asylum-seekers and refugees, poses perennial challenges (Wasem 2018) to the EU Member States. Many countries within the EU, thus, endeavour to firmly control or manage the immigration of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) into their territories (Caviedes 2004). Hence, managing immigration is an ongoing, complex, and dynamic mission for governments and other actors at different governance levels (Ambrosini 2018), and it poses concerns for EU citizens. Additionally, Ambrosini (2018) argues that many citizens of EU member countries, even those with long immigration histories, currently find the entire phenomenon unwelcoming. One reason for this insecurity is that these citizens think their countries' immigrant populations exceed reasonable or controllable limits and put a burden on their resources (Andreescu 2017). These dynamics have often resulted in acute political crises (Tsoukalis 2005) and the emergence of anti-immigrant groups in affected countries (Lönnqvist et al. 2019; Panebianco 2022). For instance, in 2015, the EU Member States registered an estimated 4.7 million immigrants. Out of these, 2.7 million had migrated from outside the EU Member States, while 1.9 million migrated within the EU zone following the EU's principle of free movement (Eurostat 2018). This data highlights significant arrivals of immigrants from third countries into the EU's territory in 2015 alone, which increased political tensions within the EU. Out of these, a record number of 1.2 million out of the 2.7 million immigrants were first-time asylum-seekers (Eurostat 2016). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the mechanisms and policies for managing immigration in the EU, particularly in Finland, were deemed to have presented challenges in dealing with the 2015-

2016 influx (Ambrosini 2018, Panebianco 2022). This phenomenon was because the sudden arrivals stretched the existing preparedness of institutions and authorities to provide viable solutions to the challenges posed by the occurrence.

Immigration into the EU, however, persists, but in 2015-2016, the EU experienced such an unusual occurrence (Geddes and Scholten 2016). According to a Euro barometer survey, since early 2013, Europe has encountered one of the most significant inflows of asylum-seekers (about 3.6 million first-time applications before the 2015 crisis) since World War II (OECD 2018). This unprecedented immigration rate in 2015-2016, whereby many migrants arrived fleeing conflict zones, disasters, persecution and poverty from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, has been described as a crisis. The main aims of these migrants, who made these dangerous journeys through the Mediterranean and other routes, were to seek asylum, refugee protection and better living standards. Due to this influx within the EU, national governments and the EU amended some policies, made various decisions, introduced diverse new ways of working and implemented several measures to resolve the situation. For instance, some EU Member States' governments erected fences to prevent migrants from entering their territories. Geddes and Scholten (2016) noted that, in the summer of 2015, the Hungarian government erected a wall on its borders with Serbia and Croatia. It was a measure to prevent immigrants who had already arrived in the EU through Greece from moving further within the zone. However, Panebianco (2022, p. 1404) contended that the construction of internal physical barriers, restoration of border controls and a general decline in cooperation among the Member States during the crisis showed an acute EU crisis. Many introduced temporary border controls within the Schengen area, which ideally is a free movement zone (Chebel d'Appollonia 2019). This narrative presents an intriguing opportunity to juxtapose crisis governance of immigration with standard governance, providing a nuanced perspective on the factors underlying the emergence of tensions in both scenarios. These border restorations during the crisis contravened the EU's directives on internal and external borders, which stipulate that Member States must unequivocally give reason(s) for denying an entrance (EU Parliament 2018). Finland, however, did not establish a border within the Schengen area but monitored the external borders robustly, with intermittent 'Stop and Search' by the Police and Border Guards (Wahlbeck 2019b). Other countries also found the refugee crisis a threat to their national security. Those countries appealed for more robust policies and solutions at the EU and national levels (Geddes and Scholten 2016), which led to the securitisation of immigration and stringent measures implemented by the EU and the Member States. The securitisation of immigration and the subsequent deportation of TCNs elucidate the imperative engagement of specific EU

agencies, exemplified by Frontex (Palander and Pellander 2019). The significance of Frontex's association with Finland holds particular prominence within this study, given the comprehensive examination of the deportation phenomenon.

During the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the immigrants arrived mainly in Greece and Italy, which had to shoulder the responsibilities according to the Dublin III agreement. Since the number of immigrant arrivals was high in these countries, the EU and the Member States decided to act in solidarity after Greece and Italy appealed for assistance. These appeals resulted in the agreement to relocate 160,000 asylum-seekers from Greece and Italy to the other Member States, which the Visegrád group vehemently opposed but was outvoted (Geddes and Scholten 2016). Finland was the only Member State that abstained from voting on this issue but actively implemented the decision by accepting the required[1] number of asylum-seekers (Wahlbeck 2019b). Finland's decision to refrain from voting in September 2015 was attributed to the prevailing domestic political dynamics within the government. This abstention was notably influenced by the stance taken by one of the coalition parties, the Finns Party, which vocally opposed the notion of mandatory burden-sharing. In essence, this abstention can be construed as a prudent strategy to reconcile the competing domestic political perspectives, which were further exacerbated by fervent public discourses in Finland (Wahlbeck 2019b). Although the EU Member States agreed to relocate the 160,000 asylum-seekers among themselves, there were challenges during the implementation phase, leading to its failure. Finland's share was smaller than that of some other Member States, but it was more than what Finland normally accepts as quota migrants annually, and it was described as the highest relative change in the EU (Heino and Jauhianen 2020). Okona and Takala (2019) reported that Finland received approximately 32000 asylum applications in 2015 alone. The increase in the number of immigrants, in addition to the agreed number to be relocated, which was about a tenfold increase in its annual asylum application, has been regarded as overburdening for Finland.

In Finland, the migration pattern from the Official Statistics Finland (2019) indicates that 32,758 people immigrated from abroad compared to 17,263 who emigrated in 2019. As shown in Figure 1 below, immigration to Finland has been increasing steadily but increased sharply in 2015 due mainly to the European migrant crisis and the Syrian war.

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[1] which was calculated based on the population of the Country, the gross domestic product, the number of asylum-seekers already residing in the Member State and the unemployment rate of the Member State (Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck 2018, p.15).

Figure 1 Migration between Finland and non-EU countries from 1993 to 2019
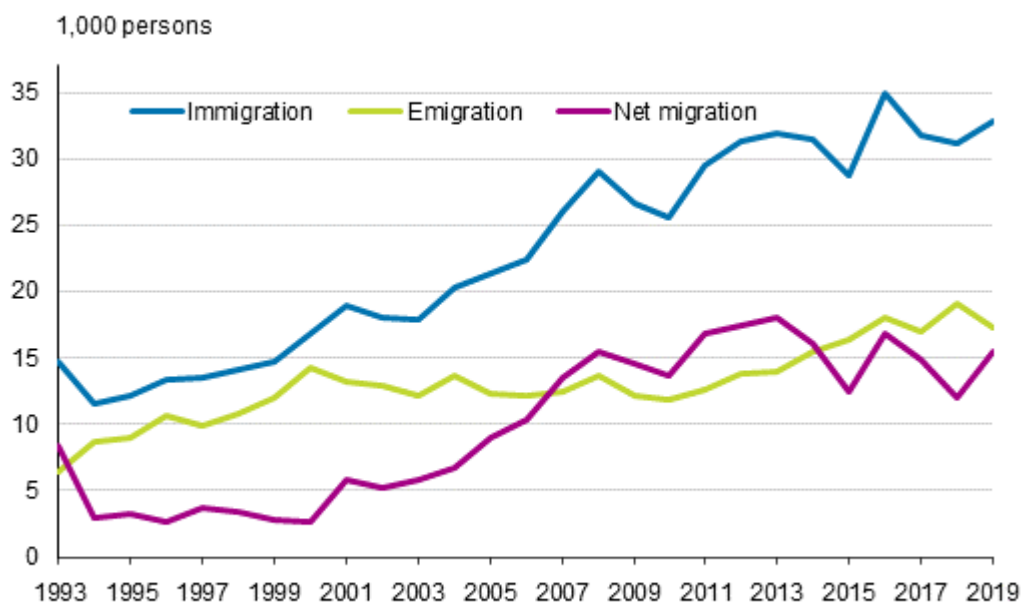
Finland's immigrant population, when compared to other EU Member States, such as Germany and France, in both absolute and relative terms, seems insignificant. However, the total immigrant population of Finland is increasing (Manilla et al. 2010; Heino and Jauhiainen 2020). With this increasing number of immigrants, Finland, as a smaller EU Member State, is also confronted with immigration governance regularly and faced the same on a different scale during the crisis in 2015-2016. Immigration governance is, thus, not limited to more prominent countries and frontline states (areas of intense migratory flows at the EU's external borders) that receive a more significant portion of TCN immigrants. Smaller countries like Finland that are also confronted with the dilemma because of the onward travelling of immigrants within the Schengen zone, relocation of asylum-seekers and reception of quota refugees are usually ignored in various migration studies (Keohane 1969; Knudsen 2002; Ingebritsen 2006; Ingebritsen et al. 2012; Kull and Tatar 2015; Wahlbeck 2019a; Mainwaring 2012). It should also be noted that Finland is a 'frontline state' because it has one of the EU's longest external borders with Russia. Although this border does not currently pose a significant mass immigration challenge, it can potentially become one of the volatile external borders of the EU. This assertion is evidenced by the Finnish authorities' decision to construct a physical border (about 240km) along some stretches of this border. The recent developments occurring at this border, such as the border closures on the Finnish side and the involvement of Frontex in ensuring its security against unauthorised entries,

highlight its current and prospective volatility (YLE NEWS 2024). This assertion underscores the significance of Finland's border with Russia within the context of EU border security and highlights the potential challenges and volatility associated with it. Therefore, this research is interested in evaluating how actors in a smaller Member State interact among themselves and with the EU level in making national and EU decisions concerning asylum-seekers and refugees and implementing them.

Similarly, compared "with the rest of Scandinavia, Finland has, until quite recently, been an isolated spot, virtually untouched by global or European migrations"; however, "the situation is changing, partly" due to "pressures within the Baltic countries and Russia" (Korkiasaari and Söderling 2016, p.2). Finland is an interesting case study because of its location as one of the longest EU external borders, shared with Russia and the recent developments of erecting physical borders on some stretches of this border, as stated above. For example, Salo and Rydgren (2018, p.243) argued that, regarding illegal immigration, Finland's main threats are the weakening predictability at the 1340 Kilometre-long eastern land border, significant border crossing points at the south-eastern border and flights from the Far East. For instance, "in March 2016, Finland and Russia agreed on temporary border restrictions at two popular border-crossing points" because "of an increase of asylum-seekers who have entered Finland from Russia" (Hangartner and Sarvimäki 2017, p.9). This Arctic route, which served as an alternative pathway diverging from the prevailing Mediterranean and Balkan routes, transitioned to become a difficult one. This shift during the 2015 migration crisis occurred owing to the reinforced border controls, including the erection of barriers, by various East and Central European nations, such as Serbia and Hungary, along those routes. Piipponen and Virkkunen (2017) noted that close to a quarter of individuals seeking asylum upon arrival in Norway and Finland from the northern direction had previously established residency or had an extended stay in Russia before embarking on the journey. This claim indicates that their traversal via the "Arctic route" is only partially a result of broader migratory phenomena and presumably not solely contingent upon Russian policies governing asylum, immigration, or labour, which primarily affect migrants from non-Russian or non-Eurasian Economic Union member states.

Although these occurrences have steadily increased Finland's immigrant population over the last decades (Heino and Jauhiainen 2020), Finland's overall population remains relatively low, suggesting that more immigration is necessary (Mannila et al. 2010). Finland presents a compelling case study, as the endorsement of immigration in the Finnish context is commonly synonymous with the perception of an increased presence of refugees and asylum-seekers. These prevailing misconceptions are intricately tied to the perceived

"cultural threat" attributed to immigrants and are perpetuated by media portrayals, with a particular emphasis on asylum-seekers (Heino and Jauhiainen, 2020, p. 83). Finland's immigration is a relatively new phenomenon because it has traditionally been a country of emigration (Rajas 2014), as shown in Figure 2. It has historically been a country of emigration until recently, in the 80s, when immigration became topical (Mannila et al. 2010, p.29; Korkiasaari and Söderling 2016, p.2). However, in the 1980s, emigration reached its lowest post-war level, whereas immigration increased, with most of the immigrants being Finnish returnees. According to Manilla et al. (2010, p.30), due to the ethnocentric approach embedded in Finnish immigration policy during the 1980s, Finland has witnessed a consistent influx of Finnish individuals from the Russian Federation and Estonia. This divergence in the migration patterns of arrivals from the communist bloc after the end of the Cold War is because of Finland's geographical position between the communist and capitalist blocs (Rajas 2014). This trend has persisted with occasional fluctuations up to the present day. Current increases in immigration to Finland from third countries have rendered the phenomenon a delicate subject, prompting politicians to exhibit hesitancy in incorporating it into their strategic agendas (Heino and Jauhiainen 2020). Implicitly, immigration to Finland has been rising steadily and emigration falling, as seen in Figure 2 below, because of global refugee crises and successive Finnish governments' efforts to address estimated labour future shortages (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2020).

Figure 2 Migration to and from Finland 1945-2000

Migration to and from Finland 1945–2000
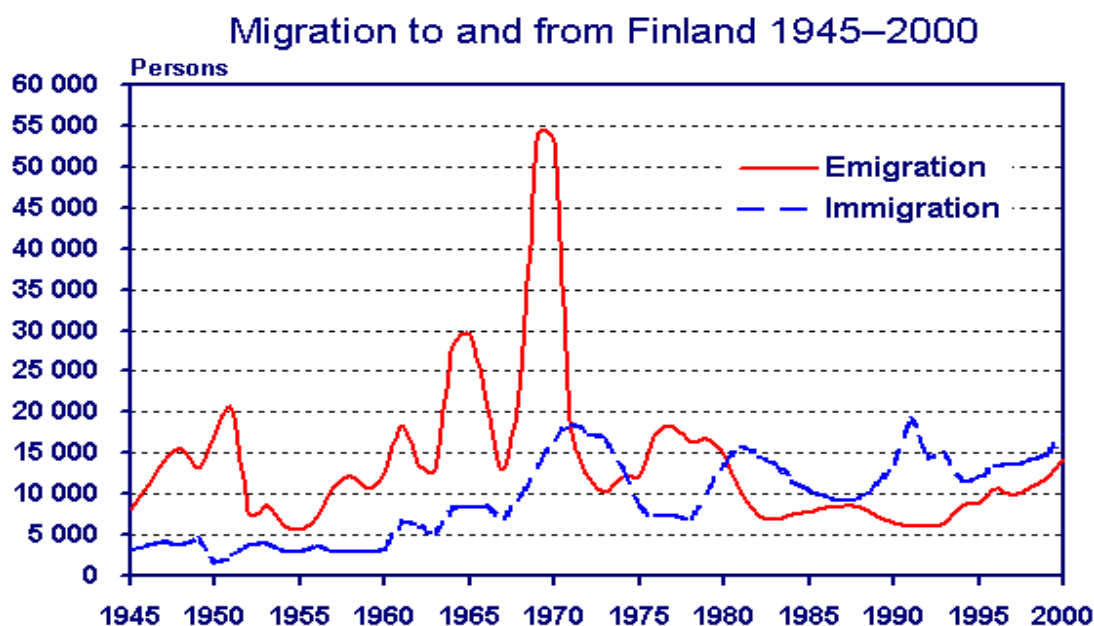
Source: Statistics Finland; Figure: Jouni Korkiasaari, Institute of Migration 2001

Consequently, most studies on Finnish migration have mentioned that emigration from Finland is prioritised to the detriment of immigration (Leinonen 2019; Korkiasaari and Söderling 2016; Taskinen 2005; Rajas 2014; Manilla et al. 2010), which is one reason this project will add to the existing body of limited research on immigration into Finland. This dichotomy reflects the sine qua non of immigration to Finland and the associated need to govern the phenomenon through various policy decisions.

Like the other EU Member States, Finland encourages labour migration to meet their labour market needs while preventing unauthorised entry into their territories (Heino and Jauhiainen 2020). For instance, the European Commission (2015) reports migration as a significant contributor to the welfare and growth sustainability of the economies of the Member States. Therefore, the Member States, notably Finland, which is of interest in this research, have, for decades, outlined policies and restructured procedures regarding asylum-seeking and other forms of immigration (International Organization for Migration 2004) in attempts to address the various challenges. Also, higher life expectancy has led to the growth in dependency ratios, thus leading to labour shortages in most sectors of the Finnish economy (Finnish Ministry of the Interior 2018). Lower birth rates are equally of concern in Finland as they are in most European countries (OECD 2018). Finland, however, is a country that is selective in the type of immigrants they encourage or seek into their territory, which is evidenced by the country's national immigration strategy of 2013-2020 that emphasises skilled migrants. In this sense, Finland does not see asylum-seekers and refugees as a

potential labour force (Heino and Jauhiainen 2020, p.76). Also, because of the high support received recently by the populist party (True Finns), known for its anti-immigrant and anti-EU stances, asylum-seekers and refugees are not regarded as adding up to their future labour needs (Rajas 2014).

These narratives underscore the multilevel nature of immigration policy decision-making and implementation, with diverse institutions and actors playing pivotal roles at various levels. Managing immigration thus necessitates the harmonisation of practices, interests, perspectives, interactions, institutions, actors, and policies that impact immigration. This study employs the MLG conceptual framework to assess and contextualise the research to enhance comprehension of the governance of immigration decision-making and implementation. It analyses the influences of a smaller state on the EU decision-making and implementation and vice-versa due to their multilevel interactions. It mainly leverages the social constructivism theory to elucidate the theoretical implications of these interrelations, using Finland as a case study within the European Union.

1.1   Goal and Objectives of the Study

The majority of prior studies (Hellman and Lerkkanen 2019; Dahlvik 2017; Fumarola 2021) have centred their attention on the public's opinions, with limited exploration of migration policies and the dynamics of interaction among different governance stakeholders (Barslund et al. 2019). This research mainly examines the multilevel interconnections between Finland (national and local levels) and the EU in governing immigration. Mainwaring (2012) argues that cooperation among different actors at different levels of governance has increased because of the involvement of the supranational and local levels instead of concentrating only at the national level. In Finland, diverse actors, such as the Border Guards, Police, Finnish Red Cross, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, are also involved in the governance of immigration at the national and local levels (Mancheva et al. 2023). Research on multi-actor interactions in governing immigration in Finland is limited. This argument thus supports the literature gap this study strives to fill regarding collaboration between the EU and Member States' institutions in governing immigration.

According to Ambrosini (2018), the EU tries to harmonise the Member States' policies to facilitate common interests and equally apply the rules and regulations across its jurisdiction. For instance, the EU has assiduously worked towards harmonising the immigration policies of its Member States and has succeeded in the free movement and collaboration through cross-border administrations and commitments within the Member states, as previously

stated. However, it has achieved little regarding managing its external borders because the Member States formulate and implement their policies with some resistance among some Member States (Mainwaring 2012). Concerning external border management, the Member States want to control who arrives, resides, and exits their territory, as well as the durations and purposes of stay. However, in times of difficulty, as experienced during the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the Member States expect the EU to provide leadership in solving their dilemma (Ponzo 2022). This study thus examines how the EU and Finland collaborated to implement immigration laws and the various changes introduced during the crisis. As mentioned above, it also evaluates the regular and crisis MLG cooperation between Finland and the EU. That is, how Finland's immigration policies and regulations conform to or conflict with the EU's internal and external immigration management.

1.1.1 Research Questions

The following questions explain the choice of Social constructivism as the appropriate theory to analyse the MLG of immigration in Finland and the EU and support the methodological approaches used in this study. The questions are:

RQ.1) How does the constructivist perspective influence the understanding of the factors that shape and differentiate the nature and patterns of interaction between immigration governance institutions in Finland and their multilevel relationship with the European Union?

RQ.2) How do Finland's immigration management institutions establish and maintain connections with the European Union in the consistent implementation of immigration policies, both in regular circumstances and during crisis situations?

The first research question explores the different or similar roles played by the institutions involved in immigration governance in Finland. Kooiman (2003) argued that no single actor/institution has all the requisite know-how and intelligence to govern a society. This argument reinforces why several institutions and actors are responsible for controlling immigration in Finland. Hence, the study compares the roles of these immigration institutions by interviewing them within Finland and at the EU level. It compares the nature of their roles, how they construct their beliefs and ideas, and the patterns of interaction within the MLG framework. Thus, this study analyses the existing relationship between the institutions governing immigration in Finland to ascertain whether the patterns follow parallel or vertical, horizontal or diagonal relationships, rendering it complex and dynamic. Parallel relationships imply that institutions operate independently or side by side without

significant interactions, while vertical relationships suggest hierarchical connections, where some institutions have authority over others. Horizontal relationships mean institutions at the same level of government or authority working together, and diagonal" relationships indicate complex or non-standard interactions that don't fit neatly into the other categories.

Hence, this study investigates how these actors coordinate or cooperate internally and externally in administering immigration. It also explores whether there are overlapping, conflicting and challenging positions in the performance of their responsibilities. The research then elaborates on why these interactions exist among them and how these facilitate decision-making and implementation to govern immigration in the country. According to Pierre and Peters (2002), the interaction among different actors, with or without direct government involvement, is a crucial substitute for the usual top-down notion of government. Bavinck et al. (2013) also argued that interaction incorporates broader participation in governance from both its normative and practical perspectives. Hence, it is contended that interactively governing immigration has the edge over the solo approaches typically employed by conventional governmental bodies (Bavinck et al., 2013). This assertion underscores the significance of examining the dynamic interactions among diverse institutions at varying levels, applying the social constructivism theory to the empirical MLG of immigration in this study.

The second research question focuses on how Finland's immigration implementation authorities connect with the EU. It investigates the dynamics and complexities involved in managing immigration by Finland and the EU to achieve a common aim, specifically, how they interacted in resolving the influx of immigrants in the 2015-2016 crisis. This analysis evaluates how immigration governance occurs at the EU level and how its dynamics and complexities travel in both directions within the MLG framework. The research acknowledges the dependence of the EU on the Member States to implement its immigration regulations while the Member States look up to the EU to provide leadership regularly and in times of crisis when governing immigration. Thus, the EU Member States have integrated aspects of the EU's laws into their national legal systems. When interests conflict, the EU laws and rulings supersede those of the Member States' domestic laws (Nugent 2017). Nugent (2017) further argued that this is mostly not the case, as the Member States can sometimes prefer to pay compensations or serve sanctions. Therefore, immigration emerges as a highly delicate domain wherein Member States typically prefer autonomy in addressing the associated challenges. This statement underscores the importance of investigating interactive governance, given the intricate nature of the subject matter.

1.2 Significance and Contributions of the Study

This study contributes to knowledge by investigating the decisions made, and the enforcement of these measures within the EU and Finland during the 2015-2016 influx and their corresponding impact on Finland's and the EU's immigration policies. That is, it examines how Finland dealt with the influx within the EU and national context and how the EU interacted mainly with Finland as a Member State. This assertion indicates that this research examines the dynamics and complexities involved in negotiating policy decisions and implementing them within and beyond the national level. Although research (Kull and Tatar 2015; EMN 2017; EMN 2018; Pryhönen and Wahlbeck 2019b; Collett and Le Coz 2018) exists on the migration crisis, no research reviewed at the time of this study has examined these dynamics and complexities of the immigration management relationship between the EU and Finland, specifically, policy implementations using the constructivist lens in explaining the MLG interactions. Therefore, the design of this study contributes significantly to knowledge through its nuanced approach to evaluating the linkages between immigration policy implementation within Finland and between Finland and the EU in an MLG relationship. The study adds to the understanding of the practical application of social constructivism theory in MLG of immigration within the EU context and the ongoing relationship of the EU with Finland. The use of MLG as a conceptual framework and social constructivism theory to analyse immigration policy implementation in the EU and Finland thus significantly contributes to the field of public policy. It also supports Kooiman's (2003) claim that no single actor possesses all the required knowledge to govern society by contending that interactive governance, especially in immigration studies, should be considered ideal. Again, the ideas, beliefs and perspectives that are socially constructed through actors' interactions form a significant aspect of immigration governance. While rational-choice institutionalism provides insights into the dynamics of bargaining and coalition formation, constructivist perspectives offer a more nuanced comprehension of the factors influencing the occurrence or non-occurrence of specific changes and outcomes within the context of MLG interactions.

Also, this research is mainly about immigration decision-making and policy implementation within the EU and Finland. This study contributes to the literature on public policy, politics, international relations, and immigration governance by analysing the complex and dynamic relationship between a small Member State (Finland) and the EU. That is, how a smaller Member State can regularly influence the policy decisions within the EU machinery and during a crisis, especially in implementing the decisions. Smaller Member States such as Malta, Cyprus, Estonia and Finland are usually underrepresented in the migration literature

(Keohane 1969; Knudsen 2002; Ingebritsen 2006; Ingebritsen et al. 2012; Kull and Tatar 2015; Wahlbeck 2019a; Mainwaring 2012), which often features the dynamics between the more prominent countries and the EU. Knudsen (2002, p.193) emphasised that one reason for the underrepresentation of small states in international relations and policy studies is that they have existed for maybe a few centuries, having been colonised or part of larger empires. Thus, it has been common in the study of international politics to write them off as uninteresting. According to Mainwaring (2012), European studies have also emphasised more significant states' dynamics despite the existence of several smaller States within the EU, which have implications for the functioning of the Union. This contention is why choosing Finland is relevant in this study to understand the events that unfolded during the crisis and how a smaller state influences policy implementation. Apart from being small in terms of population, Finland is an economically vibrant and innovative country within the EU. Its activeness on the EU stage, demonstrated in various capacities, makes it an interesting case to study. For instance, Finland was assertive during the EU Greece bailout and actively participated in it (Wahlbeck 2019b, p.304; Van Middelaar 2020). It also contributed to the relocation policy during the crisis by taking the third highest and the required number of relocated migrants and helped train other EU countries in asylum and refugee management.

Since the beginning of the 2010s, there has been a notable increase in research on the migration of refugees to Europe, particularly emphasising their integration. Scholars have dedicated considerable interest in the reception and assimilation of refugees into local communities. There is a growing literature exploring the responsibilities of local authorities and officials in handling asylum and refugee reception (Schader 2020). Schader (2020, p.2023) emphasised that:

> What is still partly understudied and under-theorised, however, is the perception of the 2015/16 immigration movement by local officials and its local repercussions and, significantly, its longer-term consequences.

Hence, this study builds on the gap Schader (2020) identified regarding local officials' perception of the 2015-2016 crisis. The current research goes beyond local authorities' perception of 2015-2016 to analyse the deportation processes in handling the crisis on a multilevel. Practically, this study focuses on how Finland managed this crisis internally alongside interactions with the other Member States of the EU and not on the procedures for granting asylum or the perceptions of the authorities. For instance, the crisis had several immediate real-life ramifications in Finland; thus, numerous new reception centres sprang

out throughout the country, there was the recruitment of new officials dealing with the numerous applications and the government toughening of the immigration legislation (Perälä and Niemi 2018, p.80). In civil society, many volunteered to assist the asylum-seekers while others demonstrated against their arrival. During the same period, some native Finns organised vigilante groups, patrolling neighbourhoods and attacking the reception centres accommodating asylum-seekers. (Perälä and Niemi 2018, p.80). This research investigation is thus both timely and makes a substantial contribution to existing knowledge by employing a constructivist perspective in analysing the MLG dynamics associated with immigration.

1.3   Limitations of the Study

Like most research, this has its limitations, which are elucidated in the following paragraphs. Institutions and actors involved in immigration governance at the various levels analysed in this study are numerous. However, this research did not cover all the institutions at each level. The possibility of capturing every institution at each level studied was far from possible because, as a PhD researcher, I am limited by the scope, time, words, and financial support needed to execute a large-scale project involving every single actor. Again, issues of gaining access to all these institutions would have taken longer, judging from the difficulty in accessing these elites. However, purposive sampling facilitated the selection of crucial actors at each level, albeit important here is subjective. In short, I acknowledge this as a restriction in terms of time, financial resources and the need to focus the research that defines my specific contribution(s) to knowledge in the fields of governance, migration, politics and international relations studies and public policy implementation.

Related to the limitation mentioned in the paragraph above is that not all institutions initially planned to examine at all the levels granted access. There were difficulties in gaining entry to some EU-level institutions for interviews because they argued they had limited resources and capacities. However, persistence and consistency enabled me to interview some relevant actors for my research. Some national level institutions were also difficult to convince to participate in the study simply due to their lack of interest. Therefore, in order to overcome this limitation, I resorted to government documents and other relevant EU data from existing primary and secondary sources, such as the EU official documents of the minutes of meetings, publications, and discourses.

The advent of the COVID-19 era also brought many limitations to my research. Apart from respondents not being interested in having face-to-face interviews, they equally had many excuses regarding their availability, as elaborated above. As already known, elites are tricky

to access, but COVID-19 and the restrictions during the pandemic added extra difficulties. I resorted to online interviews and could only do a few face-to-face interviews after the lockdown measures were lifted and worldwide activities and travelling returned. I realised that face-to-face interviews made the respondents more openly relaxed and willing to participate better than the online ones. This assertion is not to discredit the information obtained through online means. It was the best available opportunity and alternative at the time and equally served the purpose. The emphasis here is that the respondents seemed to trust one-on-one interactions more.

Finally, translating official Finnish government and parliamentary documents from Finnish to English posed challenges. Some of these documents did not have official translations, and when they did, the contents of the official Finnish version surpassed the English translations. This task was time-consuming and demotivating, but I deduced the necessary contents to support my arguments.

1.4   Chapter Plan

This study commences by establishing the nature and causes of migration, thus presenting an overview of the problem statement and reasons for the research. Therefore, Chapter 1 covers the background, goal and objectives, scope of the study, contributions of the research to knowledge, limitations, and outline of the study plan.

Chapter 2 reviews related studies on immigration into the EU and Finland. It broadly examines the nature of the 2015-2016 migration crisis within the EU and how institutions worked together to find solutions to the phenomenon. It further elaborates on immigration governance and asylum-seeking within the EU and Finland,

Chapter 3 espouses Social Constructivism as the preferred theory and MLG as a heuristic tool. It examines the theory and how other scholars have applied it in their works. The chapter also captures the concepts of decision-making and policy implementation. It encompasses the significance and limitations of MLG's and its application in this study. The chapter then presents the methods and methodology of the analysis. Thus, it elaborates on the reasons for choosing qualitative and the case study approach as the methodology employed in this study. It also examines elite interviewing, how the elites were accessed, the semi-structured interviewing technique used in gathering the data, and a discussion of the study's validity, reliability, and generalizability. This chapter also discusses the steps involved in using FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS to analyse the empirical data collected.

Subsequently, Chapter 4 presents the empirical data analysed in responding to research question one (RQ.1). This analysis involved discussions using the literature reviewed on immigration into the EU and Finland, Social Constructivism theory and regular multi-level decision-making within Finland. It contains a blend of primary and secondary data used to clarify the research's overall goal.

Chapter 5 also discusses the policy implementation and decision-making on immigration governance in Finland and the EU, discussing research question two (RQ.2). The Social Constructivism theory explains how Finland's immigration governance institutions interactively connect to the EU level and vice-versa on a multi-level.

Further, Chapter 6 evaluates the account of deportation before, during and after the 2015-2016 migration crisis as a case study to depict crisis decision-making and policy implementation regarding immigration. Thus, it examines the issue of deportation as part of routine decision-making and policy implementation, as well as during a crisis and the aftermath.

The last chapter, the concluding part of the research, discusses the overall findings, contributions, and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2 PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION INTO THE EU AND FINLAND

2.0   Introduction

The preceding chapter laid the groundwork for this study, outlining the overarching objective, research questions, and the organisational framework of the thesis. The present chapter critically examines migration and immigration phenomena within the EU and Finland, encompassing diverse dimensions and patterns identified by eminent scholars. Consequently, this chapter synthesises insights from scholarly perspectives (Legrain 2016; Schader 2020; Mastenbroek et al. 2022; Schultz et al. 2021) to identify gaps in existing knowledge and build on them. It commences with a detailed and critical examination of migration policymaking in the EU, followed by an exploration of scholarly contributions concerning the EU's migration and immigration dynamics, as well as the complexities of seeking asylum and refugee scenarios within its scope. Simultaneously. a discussion regarding Finland progressed through an examination of comparable themes, culminating in an analysis of the 2015-2016 migration crisis and its antecedent and subsequent developments. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary covering the critical thematic elements explored.

2.1   An Overview of Migration Policymaking in the EU

The formulation of migration policy within the EU is a complex and dynamic process that involves multiple actors, institutions, and stages. This process depicts variations among states and within the EU, showcasing distinctions in political systems, power distribution, governance tiers, judicial influence, diversity of interest groups, and political ethos (Spencer 2017). The EU's approach to migration policy reflects its commitment to the free movement of people within the Schengen Area while also addressing challenges related to border control, asylum, and the management of irregular migration. This intricate and political process involves numerous internal and external participants. The stages of the policy cycle, ranging from issue perception to decision-making and implementation, as well as the impact of influential actors, differ not only across countries but also within Ministries and across diverse issues (Spencer 2017). The process typically begins with agenda setting, where migration-related issues are identified and brought to the attention of EU institutions. Internal and external factors such as changing demographics, geopolitical events, or humanitarian crises influence these calls for attention. The European Commission, as the EU's executive branch, plays a central role in policy initiation (Barslund et al. 2019). It is

responsible for drafting legislative proposals related to migration, drawing on input from various sources, including Member States, experts, and non-governmental organisations. The proposal undergoes internal consultation and impact assessments before being submitted to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament (El-Agraa 2007; Bomberg and Stubb 2003). For instance, in 2016, the European Commission introduced a comprehensive reform to the European Union's asylum policy. This reform encompassed the establishment of a lasting mechanism for the systematic distribution of refugees, automatically triggered in crisis scenarios. The proposal also included provisions allowing states the option to fulfil relocation obligations through financial means. However, the Member States disagreed with the proposal. Subsequently, in 2017, the European Parliament amended the Commission's proposals with an alternative resolution addressing concerns such as alleviating the disproportionate strain on the country of initial entry. The proposed solution introduced a relocation system founded on a continuous corrective allocation mechanism directed towards states with the lowest admission percentages (Doliwa-Klepacka and Zdanowicz 2020).

The Council of the European Union, representing Member States' governments, is a crucial decision-making body in the EU (Hodson and Peterson 2017). Discussions on migration policies within the Council occur in various configurations, depending on the specific aspects of migration being addressed, but they are mainly in the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). The Council reviews and negotiates the Commission's proposal, and decisions are primarily reached through qualified majority voting. In practice, the Council's work is organised on three levels: officials from the Member States' national administrations form working groups that examine the legislative proposals; COREPER prepares Council Meetings; and the Council adopts the legislation mainly with the European Parliament. The working groups are teams composed of officials from the national administrations of the EU Member States. Their primary task is to examine legislative proposals put forward by the European Commission. These working groups delve into the details of the proposals, discuss their implications, and negotiate potential amendments or changes. This stage allows for a thorough examination and input from the Member States before decisions are made at higher levels. The COREPER is composed of ambassadors or high-level representatives from each EU Member State. It acts as a preparatory body for the Council Meetings. COREPER I consists of temporary representatives, and COREPER II has permanent ones. COREPER members, particularly COREPER I, act on behalf of the Council during conciliation with the European Parliament and are more and more engaged in negotiations between the Council and the Parliament at initial phases in the co-decision process (Lewis 2000). The majority of

Coreper II members serve as delegates representing the Member States during intergovernmental conferences (IGCs) aimed at revising the treaties (Bostock 2002). The preparatory works for the JHA are the responsibility of COREPER II. COREPER reviews the outcomes of the working groups' discussions and prepares the agenda and decisions to be made during the Council Meetings. It serves as a crucial link between the working groups and the Council Meetings, ensuring that the discussions and proposals are thoroughly analysed and refined before reaching the highest decision-making level. During Council Meetings, ministers from the Member States (representing their respective national governments) come together to discuss, negotiate, and ultimately adopt legislative proposals. The Council works in conjunction with the European Parliament in the legislative process, meaning that both institutions must agree on a proposal for it to become law in the EU. The Council represents the Member States' interests at the EU level and plays a crucial role in shaping EU policies and regulations.

The European Parliament, as the directly elected legislative body, also plays a role in shaping migration policy (Bomberg and Stubb 2003). It debates, amends, and votes on the Commission's proposal. Within this framework, the policymaking process concerning border controls, integration, or related aspects may undergo varying degrees of parliamentary scrutiny depending on the circumstances. The Parliament's involvement ensures a democratic dimension to the decision-making process, reflecting the diverse views of EU citizens. Informal negotiations, known as trilogues, occur among representatives from the Commission, Council, and Parliament to reach a consensus. This iterative process allows for compromises and adjustments to be made, considering the different perspectives of the EU's institutions. Once an agreement is reached, the migration policy is formally adopted. Implementation is a shared responsibility between the EU and its Member States. National authorities must transpose EU directives into their domestic legislation and ensure effective enforcement while adhering to EU regulations. Migration policies are subject to periodic evaluation by various policymaking actors to assess their effectiveness and relevance (Hollifield et al. 2014; Czaika and Haas 2014). Based on this assessment, policies may be revised or updated to address emerging challenges or changing circumstances. This cyclical process ensures that the EU's migration policies remain adaptive and responsive; whether this is the reality since 2015 is elaborated in Chapter 6 of this thesis. Furthermore, it is influenced by the diverse mandates and operational methodologies of Ministries. Decisions made within bureaucratic structures may exhibit greater flexibility regarding migrants' rights compared to those subjected to the more public and parliamentary discourse characteristic of "sunshine politics." Moreover, the openness of policymakers in one department to the

evidence and ideas presented by civil society may contrast with the approach adopted by counterparts in other departments (Spencer 2017, p.4).

This section has discussed an overview of policymaking at the EU level, which is relevant to explaining the MLG and the associated complexities in immigration.

2.2   EU Migration

Many factors influence the overall nature of EU migration, which is rooted in a more extensive and complex system (Sassen 2014). Addressing these issues requires a consolidated approach that examines its complicated and multifaceted designs. Historically, the EU has made several internal and external attempts to resolve some problems regarding migration, but various arrangements and interactions hinder progress. Chebel d'Appollonia (2019) raised the issue of chaos in the flexible EU arrangements regarding integration. Bocquillon and Dobbels (2014) explored the interaction between two agenda-setting institutions of the EU using two theoretical approaches[2] and noted that the existing relationship could be best described as competitive cooperation. Correspondingly, migration is a problem or crisis that challenges the EU authorities (King and Lulle 2016, p.10).

For instance, several wars worldwide have pushed many humans to seek refuge and asylum in the EU Member States, increasing the need for governance issues and the involvement of many actors. As Ambrosini (2018) noted, right from the migrants' departure to arrival at their destinations and settling in requires various actors with different but interrelated responsibilities. Thus, it is frequently reported in various media that the severity of migration is a challenge that requires measures to resolve (Wahlbeck 2019a,b), and the rise of populist parties put pressure on the EU and Member States to act (Niemann and Zaun 2018). These perceptions, coupled with the mediatisation and politicisation of immigration, differ from what exists in practice (King and Lulle 2016). For example, the work of Zaun and Servent (2021) explored the politicisation of asylum in Germany using the Core State Power Framework. They argued that governments must pay for policies that increase asylum numbers, especially when competing with far-right and populist parties, similar to what Fumarola (2021) contended regarding the extent to which voters punish incumbents for a high number of immigrants, using the European Election study. These research underscore the complexities of migration, emphasising the need for a nuanced understanding that

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[2] The principal agent model and joint agenda setting approach.

considers immigration governance challenges, the role of various actors, the impact of media and politics, and the dynamics of public perception and political decision-making.

Recent studies by Chebel d'Appollonia (2019) analyse the implications of differentiated integration on the EU's migration crises. Her research examines differentiated integration of the EU Member States' unwillingness to become an ever closer union at three levels of the MLG framework. Similarly, Jeffery and Peterson (2020) question the relevance, application and extent of the MLG framework in their research on the EU's modern Polity. They ask whether MLG extends beyond the cohesion policy, beyond the EU and if MLG is just a descriptive framework that gives rise to theories. MLG within the EU requires solidarity among the Member States in resolving problems. The definition of solidarity and the kind the EU needs remains fuzzy. For instance, the work of Tava (2021) questions the type of solidarity that the EU has, its challenges and possible boundaries and redefinitions of the meaning of solidarity that the EU requires. EU solidarity entails the concept of reciprocal assistance and collaboration among the States belonging to the Union. Within the framework of reciprocity-based internationalism, calls for social solidarity across various levels of governance can be interpreted as requests for equitable contributions in generating significant shared benefits. This principle underscores the idea that Member States must support each other during periods of adversity, encompassing economic, political, social, and security-related challenges (Wallaschek 2019). Solidarity stands as a cornerstone of the EU, alongside democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Within the EU framework, solidarity manifests in various ways, from providing financial aid during economic downturns to offering humanitarian assistance in the face of natural disasters or conflicts. Additionally, it extends to cooperation in addressing security challenges and assisting the integration of new Member States. This commitment is to facilitate cohesion among Member States and enhance the overall stability and prosperity of the EU (Sangiovanni 2013).

A previous study by Legrain (2016) highlights that emphasis is usually placed on certain types of EU migration, disregarding other variants because of frequent and inaccurate accounts that neglect the complex and dynamic nature of migration. For instance, legal migration is favoured highly over illegal migration and the influx of refugees into a country's territory. Also, the definitions of migrants differ in different narratives depending on their assessment criteria. These definitions often confuse the classification of migrants for policy decision-making and implementation purposes. For example, in explaining migration management through border control and security, scholars (Vrăbiescu 2022; Comte and Lavenex 2022) have tackled the reintroduction of borders in Europe (Schengen zones) while implementing e-borders and the control of movement through classifying and categorising

mobilities, with differentiations in asylum and police cooperation. Similarly, Joao (2018) examined the differences in strategic cultures and approaches to migration issues by the different Member States in the wake of the 2015-2016 migrant crisis. These scholars problematised the use of digital technologies in policing EU citizens and the differences in cooperation due to the different approaches.

Another strand of scholars examined the drivers of EU policy implementation at the national level, pointing to economic fundamentals and financial market pressures as possible drivers (Efstathiou and Wolff 2019); everyday practices of local governments within the MLG (Kull and Tatar 2025); politics surrounding the EU Blue Card and Migrant Workers directives (Menz 2015) and the extent to which local, national, and European governments have interacted in governing intra-EU movements (Scholten et al. 2018). Again, Mastenbroek et al. (2022) explored the interaction enablers of European Administrative Networks (EANs) using the case of European migration networks. Using the Social Network Analysis, Mastenbroek et al. (2022) tested these interactions in the wake of the 2015-2016 migration crisis. These research examined and explored strands of EU migration and policies, yet the issue of how Member States interrelate with the EU and other actors in immigration policy implementation remains scant. Furthermore, (Kiner 2021) analysed integration trends of TCNs and asylum-seekers after the 2015-2016 crisis until 2021. Kiner's (2021) research did not aim to examine country-specific policies but provided a general overview of integration trends across Member States. Czaika et al. (2021) emphasised the role of the State in migration policies. They argued that research along these lines often adopts a narrow interpretation of the role of the State in EU migration and state migration policies by limiting them to migration policies and their impact. This study attempts to clarify the dynamics of policy implementation across multiple levels to address the existing gaps in literature. Specifically, it scrutinises the collaborative initiatives undertaken by diverse stakeholders at both the local (inclusive of police and border guards) and national levels within the Finnish context. Furthermore, this research extends its analysis to encompass the supranational level, an unexplored area by other researchers.

Both pull and push factors influence migration (Parkes 2021) despite the risks involved. Some push factors include poverty, hunger and starvation, conflicts, persecution, terrorism, and environmental conditions (thus perennial floods, droughts and famines that severely affect crops and subsequent incomes). The continuous poor conditions and wars that have devastated some countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa continue to push people to places that offer relief and better living conditions. The pull factors in the EU's context include respect for fundamental rights, higher living standards (including the available

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welfare and benefits systems), prevailing peace, freedom to live and work in the Member States, and good healthcare and quality education.

Recent increases in EU migration rates have, however, caused the Member States to dedicate enormous resources toward strictly governing immigration at the external border control points and rescuing stranded migrants at sea (Geddes and Scholten 2016). As a result, controlling borders has become a way of securing countries against immigrant intrusions and external aggressions to relieve some of the tensions among the Member States. Hence, controlling immigration at the external EU borders is a crucial aspect of immigration governance for the EU and its Member States. The EU tries to ensure the security of its external borders because of the existing open internal borders. Léonard (2010) examined such a phenomenon by evaluating the securitisation of migration flows into the EU and analysed how most security threats within the EU are attributable to all kinds of immigration. Migrants are associated with all sorts of crimes, including but not limited to terrorism, social unrest, criminality and rape. The EU, in 2004, established Frontex, a significant player in external border management whose primary objectives include addressing such security threats and through which the EU can influence the Member States' border controls. It achieves these through shared risk assessment, border guard training, and prominent collaborative operations involving returns and border patrols (Aas and Gundhus 2015). Frontex assists in returning irregular migrants whose asylum applications have been rejected (Niemann and Zaun 2018). According to Ekelund (2014), Frontex would enhance collaboration among the EU Member States at their external borders and foster solidarity in this area, ensuring consistent protection across all EU external borders, which forms part of the Commission's idea during its establishment. Léonard (2010) highlights that further study is needed to establish the relationship between Frontex and the other EU agencies. That study also adopted a sociological approach to studying the securitisation process and argued that it is well-suited for the EU's securitisation. Although securitising immigration is not the main interest of this current research, Frontex activities are, since this study addresses the issue of deportation. Securitisation seems to create awareness among citizens and authorities alike, but securitisation policy alone may not lead to reduced crimes committed by immigrants. There is a need to look beyond the measures adopted by Frontex and examine the existing practicalities concerning how these issues are actually handled.

In addition, introducing strict border controls at the external borders of the EU has consequently led to an increase in illegal immigration (Van Mol and De Valk 2016; Geddes and Scholten 2016). According to Montz and Kempi (2014), the EU Member States recorded

141,000 unlawful entrances into the EU's territory in 2011 alone. Correspondingly, there was a 35 per cent increase in return operations of 150,000 persons, which included close to 200 operations by air, water and land. The magnitude of these illegal entries and the associated pressure of returns have often resulted in fatalities. For instance, in 2013, 366 illegal migrants died on the Island of Lampedusa, fleeing war, poverty and persecution from Eritrea and Somalia (Vaughan-Williams 2015). According to UNHCR (2019), approximately 2,275 people died in the Mediterranean in 2018, an estimated average of 6 persons per day. These fatalities challenge interim and future governance actors to find a solution to the dilemma. Those who arrive illegally seek asylum or refuge, and those denied their applications remain undocumented or deported. For these reasons, this research examines the issues of deportation adopting a constructivist approach, which evaluates the deportation processes of asylum-seekers and refugees before, during and after the 2015-2016 migration that hit the EU, using Finland as a case country.

Another trend characterising the literature on EU migration governance has been its focus on policy formulation and policymaking (Reslow 2019). Policy implementation has been given significantly less attention, except for the critical literature that focuses on the impact of policies on individual lives (Tantardini and Torlay 2020, p.138). For instance, Polman et al. (2022) argued in their study that there is a need for more studies that focus on EU policy implementation and their impacts, especially on policy changes. In that regard, this research adopts a blend of social and political measures that are decided and implemented on a multilevel by different actors to address the problems of migrants and the security concerns of host states. It also concentrates on implementing the return directive as it happens regularly and during a crisis in Finland and the EU. Theoretical foundations rooted in constructivism play a pivotal role in shaping perspectives for research on immigration governance and security, as highlighted in the works of Iwuoho and Mbaegbu (2021).

2.3   Immigration into the EU

The existing literature treats immigration policy as either uniform, neglecting its multidimensional character, or only seeks to explain specific subfields, such as asylum or labour migration policies (Shultz et al. 2021, p.764). For instance, some research emphasises the politicisation of immigration in Europe (Grande et al. 2019; Hutter and Kriesi 2022; Niemann and Zaun 2018) and media discourse on immigration and its effects (Eberl et al. 2019). However, understanding how implementation experiences are mobilised and responded to at the EU level is especially important in a time in which European integration is becoming increasingly politicised, the democratic character of the EU is being questioned,

and tensions between domestic and EU governance rising (Polman et al. 2022, p.208: Wolff 2020; p.250). Therefore, this research examines the multilevel dimension of immigration governance in Finland and the EU in line with these arguments. It addresses the gap between implementing EU policies at the local, national, and EU levels by examining the tensions within these interactions. Meanwhile, the EU established numerous European administrative networks (EANs): groups of national administrative organisations, such as agencies and ministries, tasked with the national implementation and enforcement of EU law to address gaps between the EU's regulations and implementation. Consequently, by enabling the exchange of skills and expertise, these EANs can promote national EU implementation and help retain national control over implementation (Mastenbroek et al. 2022, p.1657).

Immigration politics in the EU are about how the Member States tackle the phenomenon in a unified form because of the existing relationships within the European integration (Geddes and Scholten 2016). A common approach is essential because no Member State can single-handedly resolve the complex issues involved in immigration. Meanwhile, the most common mandate the Member States can give to the EU is to harmonise their immigration policies that govern the arrival of TCNs into the region (Terrón and Pinyol 2018) for purposes other than residency. For instance, the Member States still prefer to take responsibility for their immigration policies and determine the number of legal immigrants residing for work. Terrón and Pinyol (2018, p.4) emphasised that due to the securitisation of migration policies in the aftermath of the 09/11 attacks, the Member States of the EU are reluctant to entrust competencies in "migration, border control and asylum to the EU level". These different laws and labour market policies in the various Member States have often resulted in disagreements in decision-making at the EU level. Such disputes have sometimes led some Member States to take specific actions alone without consultations with the other Member States of the Union (Nello 2012). The OECD (2018) research highlights that the EU struggles to attract international talent due to these unilateral positions because of the Member States' different labour markets and immigration laws. This investigation assesses the interactive, collaborative dynamics among stakeholders operating at the local, national, and supranational levels in order to scrutinise immigration governance. In doing so, it lends empirical weight to the assertions posited by Terrón and Pinyol (2018) that the different Member States of the EU have different approaches yet must interact. The central aim is to examine whether the immigration governance nexus between Finland and the European Union adheres to or diverges from established frameworks.

Nevertheless, the issue of immigration is a prominent source of political disunity facing the European Union. For instance, the unsuccessful implementation of the decision to relocate

160,000 migrants within the European Union is a typical example of such disunity (Niemann and Zaun 2018). Although they agreed to the relocation amidst protests from some Member States, there were still problems in implementing the policy (Geddes and Scholten 2016). This synopsis indicates the complexity involved in implementing migration policies on a uniform front. For instance, Uçarer (2022) emphasised that this failure to relocate the people needing international protection among the Member States was somewhat sluggish, contrary to anticipations. This relocation thus tested the principle of solidarity and the equitable sharing of responsibility established in Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Panebianco 2022). As seen in Uçarer (2022, p.36):

> European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in 2016 asserted that: At the end of 2015, the EU could look back on a year when European solidarity withstood what may have been the most remarkable trials it has faced since the end of World War II. European solidarity will prevail in 2016 as well, so long as member states' leaders follow through on meeting their commitments. (Juncker, 2016)

Uçarer (2022, p.36) described this occurrence as a rather charitable depiction of developments in the EU.

2.3.1 Seeking Asylum and Refuge in the EU

Contemporary Europe has witnessed the EU taking extra coordinated actions in the field of asylum policy. According to Van Mol and De Valk (2016), the number of asylum applications within the EU has soared from 15,000 to 300,000 annually between the early 1970s and the twentieth century. Meanwhile, the sudden inflow of asylum-seekers and refugees in 2015 and 2016 led to challenges in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), which was rooted in the Dublin III Regulation for determining the State responsible for examining an asylum application (Doliwa-Klepacka and Zdanowicz 2020, p.1002; Wahlbeck 2019b, Panebianco 2022). This rapid surge in asylum and refuge-seeking, explained later in this chapter and Chapter 6, burdened the EU and Member States' authorities, resulting in moral and political problems for these various governance actors (Ambrosini 2018); and exposed the consistent dysfunctionalities of the CEAS (Niemann and Zaun 2018). For instance, the asylum and refugee politics within the EU have often resulted in a 'solidarity crisis' and tensions at the EU level because of the Member States' diverging and conflictive perspectives (Heiman et al. 2019, p.212).

As a result, political sensitivities and disagreements abound over the nature and scope of solidarity in the EU's common policy on asylum, immigration and border control,

undermining the EU's ability to pursue joint policies in these areas (Gadd et al. 2020, p.6). Gadd et al. (2020, p.6) contended that "migration policies related to asylum have been the most contested aspect of migration ever since the so-called migration crisis", which is why this research is interested in the deportation policy implementation after the crisis. Often, tensions in asylum and migration policies emerge from the values of security (Léonard 2010) and community, on the one hand, which comes from the particularism of (state) sovereignty, emphasising the need to control and limit immigration. On the other hand, the values of freedom and human rights emerging from liberal universalism command openness (Lavenex 2019, p.568). Implicitly, sovereign states wish to control asylum and immigration, but at the same time, their democratic values and commitments to various international agreements conflict, leading to these tensions. Other researchers have examined gender gaps in the recognition rates of asylum and refugees in the EU (Plümper and Neumayer 2021), policy reforms over asylum receptions beyond the emphasis on legal harmonisation (Ponzo 2022), problems encountered by people seeking protection who already live in the Member States territory (Doliwa-Klepacka and Zdanowicz 2020), and how the vulnerability of asylum-seeker and refugees are racialised and highly gendered (Freedman 2019).

Further, a Dahlvik (2017) study emphasised the neglect of social constructions of asylum-seeking and the kind of migration regime in the EU. An earlier investigation by Saurugger and Mérand (2010) asserted that the European Union's constructivism has become linked to socialisation and learning processes within its institutions and among the Member States. Simultaneously, the study emphasised its role in shaping European Identity. For example, the methods of socialisation and interpersonal exchanges within the institutions of the European Union exhibit distinctive features of argumentation and learning. These deliberative interactions can influence state agents' interests within supranational contexts (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001). Iwuoha and Mbaegbu (2021) reinforce the perspective presented by Checkel and Moravcsik, asserting that the ongoing interactions and learning exchanges among states' identities and preferences can undergo shaping and reshaping through nuanced discursive processes of socialisation facilitated by norms. Significantly, "the degree to which established theories of immigration policy help us explain the relative openness of countries to refugees and migrant workers also remains an open question" (Schultz et al. 2021, p.764). These theories have not captured the relationships existing between specific Member States of the EU but instead argued that the "empirical complexity of immigration policies can only be understood as a combination of its subfields using general EU approaches" (Schultz et al. 2021,p.764). For instance, by examining the migration and asylum policies of the EU Member States, there are indications of disparities

in the development of national and regional approaches in the search for measures forming a joint EU migration policy (Kiner 2021, p.411). This research, however, examines the asylum and refuge-seeking phenomenon regarding how governance authorities collaborate and cooperate in executing the return directive in Finland and the EU. According to Kiner (2021, p.412), the EU increasingly endeavours to implement a common approach to asylum policy while simultaneously trying to establish border control agreements with migrants' countries of origin or developing cooperation programmes on migrant employment and subsequent social inclusion.

Barslund et al. (2019, p.16) contend that all asylum and [immigration] policies are multidimensional in that they simultaneously require multiple decisions on different aspects of the overall policy package. Hence, this research examines the multifaceted aspects of the return directive in the Finnish and EU context, emphasising mainly the 2015-2016 asylum and refugee crisis that the EU and the Member States experienced. This research also builds on the work of Doliwa-Klepacka and Zdanowicz (2020, p.1002), whose work discussed actions taken by the European Union during the migration and refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016. Consequently, the current study examines actions the EU and a particular Member State took during the 2015-2016 crisis, therefore, building on their work. However, this research analyses a different and crucial perspective of the work of Doliwa-Klepacka and Zdanowicz (2020) by examining the case of deportation of immigrants before, during, and after the 2015-2016 crisis. This study also delves into the collaborative endeavours in immigration governance to explore the reasons behind divergences in policy implementation within the MLG framework. The examination of Finland's case is particularly noteworthy in addressing this research gap, given its proactive involvement in the relocation effort and accepting the sixth-highest number of asylum-seekers (Wahlbeck 2019b). Despite Finland's notable engagement on the EU stage, it remains a comparatively underexplored Member State (Wahlbeck 2019a; Mainwaring 2012). Once again, Finland aligns with the principles of solidarity and burden-sharing, a stance influenced by its extensive external border with Russia.

Comte and Lavenex (2021) attempted a similar study, but theirs was on integration. Their study reviewed the dynamics behind differentiated integration (DI) in the fields of asylum, borders and police cooperation, applying a framework they developed in the EU IDEA project (Lavenex and Križić 2019), thus examining governance structures, their effectiveness and legitimacy. Their research also did not discuss the deportation of asylum and refugee seekers, which this research addresses. Again, Dubow and Kuschminder (2021)

studied strategies refugee families adopted to circumnavigate border control movements to access asylum and did not examine deportation.

2.4   Immigration into Finland

As stated in Chapter 1, immigration into Finland is a recent phenomenon as the country has a history of emigration. Immigration has thus become topical within Finland due to current happenings around the world pushing migrants towards Europe and subsequently into Finland. There exist numerous categories of immigrants, such as labour or skilled migrants, students and researchers, families, returnees, asylum-seekers, refugees, and irregular or undocumented migrants. Meanwhile, irregularities [in classifying immigrants] are problems authorities face since having the correct data to classify migrants as refugees, asylum-seekers, or other purposes remains (Könönen 2020). However, within this list, the research is interested in asylum-seekers and refugees, as explained later in this chapter in section 2.4.1 below. Finland's commitment as a signatory to the International Convention on Human Rights and its status as a Member State of the EU underscores its dedication to fulfilling obligations related to the reception of refugees and asylum-seekers (Basavapatna and Dasgupta 2010). This commitment serves as a contributing factor to the observed rise in immigration to Finland (Heino and Jauhiainen 2020). It should be emphasised that not all applicants for asylum or refuge get accepted, as some are detained, others deported, and many remain undocumented as their applications were rejected or not recognised. For instance, the research by Vanto et al. (2022) explored the asylum recognition rate in Finland and emphasised that there was a dramatic drop because the Finnish immigration control authorities used what they termed 'collectivised discretion'.

Another aspect of immigration to Finland is that irregular immigration is a problem confronting the government, increasing the interest in border controls. For instance, Palander and Pellander (2019) presented a historical account of immigration governance in Finland, emphasising the interplay between mobility and security within the Finnish Border and immigration regimes. Their research is mainly on how security plays a role in how the governance of immigration is implemented. However, according to Könönen (2020, p.1):

> The discussion on irregular migration usually draws either on the analysis of immigration policies, highlighting the legal production of irregular migrants through the restrictive entry and residency regulations (Dauvergne 2008; de Genova 2002) or on empirical case studies, which have produced valuable information on irregular migrants' struggles and survival strategies (e.g., Andersson 2014; Menjívar 2006).

It is essential to highlight that efforts aimed at tackling irregular migration and promoting regular or labour immigration have inadvertently resulted in a rise in irregular immigration and the emergence of clandestine networks engaged in human trafficking (Ambrosini 2018). Consequently, this has increased asylum applications and the number of individuals seeking refuge among those involved in irregular migration. Also, Könönen (2020) argues that detention records provide a better assessment of grounds for deportation or the entire irregular migration trajectories. His research did not intend to analyse deportation, but some attempts emerged due to the relationship between detentions and deportations being mutually inclusive. The present study builds on Könönen (2020) ideas on analysing immigration policies (specifically, deportation in this research). Likewise, it uses the same case study country (Finland) to examine how various actors on different levels of governance collaborate to handle emerging issues regularly and during a crisis. Exploring the diverse actors involved in the governance process helps to decipher how immigration is collaboratively governed (Caviedes 2014). An MLG approach from a constructivist perspective is of interest in this research and is thus preferred and discussed in the following chapter.

In sum, Leinonen (2019) detailed various research and themes on immigration into Finland in her Migration Bibliography that Finnish scholars (Nykänen et al. 2017; Hiitola and Sotkasiira 2018) significantly expanded their research on forced migration and migration governance in response to heightened political and public discourse on migration in Europe following the increased influx of refugees and asylum-seekers in 2015–2016. A notable shift in research themes occurred between 2010–2014 and 2015–2019. While the early 2010s focused on traditional topics such as children and youth, labour market dynamics, integration, cultural issues, education, and citizenship, the period of 2015–2019 witnessed a marked increase in attention to forced migration (refugees, asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants). Additionally, migration governance and control emerged as prominent research areas, reflecting changes in global migration patterns in the mid-2010s (Leinonen 2019, p.25).

Leinonen (2019, p.25) introduces research projects on immigration in Finland, delving into the existing literature by Finnish scholars and the identified research themes, which underscores the contemporary relevance of the study, citing a period of heightened focus on migration governance and controls from 2015-2019. The passage reveals a gap in the literature, particularly regarding the interaction between authorities on a multilevel, which the current research aims to address. Specifically, the study focuses on governance collaboration, utilising the MLG conceptual framework to analyse the deportation of

asylum-seekers and refugees. The rationale for this approach lies in the belief that engaging at different levels can facilitate the development of effective policies and agreements to address emerging immigration challenges.

2.4.1 Seeking Asylum and Refugee in Finland

Migrating to Europe has intensified recently, and many Nordic countries have received remarkably more asylum-seekers than before (Jyrkinen et al. 2019, p.166). According to Schenner et al. (2019, p.83), Finland's asylum claims were low until 2015, when they surged. However, in the Autumn of 2015, although asylum applications increased across Europe, Finland's share of positive decisions reduced significantly (Vanto et al. 2021, p.3) due to various changes introduced by the Finnish immigration governance actors. Bodström (2020, p.5) supports the contention of Vanto et al. (2021) that "before 2016, Finland's positive asylum decision was above the European Union's, which, in 2016, reduced well below the said average". This analogy means that the number of refusal decisions increased, which implies an increase in the returns or deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees. This research's interest in examining the deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees from Finland, juxtaposed with the EU's, makes it essential to build on the work of Bodström (2020), who also studied the legitimisation of asylum decisions in Finland.

Earlier academic research regarding seeking asylum and refuge in Finland has focussed on asylum decisions and processes primarily from the interpretation and psychological perspectives (Herlihy et al. 2012; Herlihy and Turner 2009; Blight 2015; Wikström and Johansson 2013). Other studies have emphasised the production of asylum interview protocols (Díez 2011), particular groups of asylum-seekers, such as women (Berger 2009; Melloy 2007), unaccompanied asylum-seeking girls' time management in residential care in Finland (Kohli and Kaukko 2017), vulnerable families (Blight 2015) and sexual minorities (Berger 2009; Millbank 2009; Vogler 2016), hospitality (Merikoski 2021; Lyytinen 2022), harmonisation of Finnish asylum policy with EU standards (Basavapatna and Dasgupta 2010) and legitimisation (Bodström 2020). Further research by scholars have also emphasised non-citizen protests in the politics of human rights (Näre 2020), the role of affect and emotions in Finland's first-ever large-scale anti-deportation protest (Pirkkalainen 2021), the role of gender in caring for asylum-seekers (Jyrkinen et al. 2019), institutional distrusting among pro-asylum activists Finns (Pirkkalainen et al. 2022), political polarisation among Finnish political elites running for municipal elections (Lönnqvist et al. 2020), governance of a parallel health system for asylum-seekers with a right-to-health approach (Tuomisto et al. 2019) and politics of belonging discussions in public debates in Finland and Estonia

(Ojala et al. 2019). However, this research addresses a knowledge gap by exploring the MLG dimension of Finland's relationship with the EU, mainly through a constructivist lens, an aspect overlooked in previous studies.

According to Schenner et al. (2019, p.83), asylum claimants were – and still are – not considered a potential active labour force by the Finnish State despite having the right to work (Farchy and Liebig 2017; Jokinen 2016; Wahlbeck 2019a). Asylum status is obtainable on three bases: the UN Convention on Refugee Protection, subsidiary protection, and humanitarian grounds (Karldöttir et al. 2018). In Finland, asylum-seekers possessing identity documents can start working three months after applying and six months for those without documentation; that is §79, Aliens Act, 30 April 2004/301. They can also apply for a work permit if they find employment that fulfils the requirements for such a document (including a salary above the income threshold). Asylum-seekers are also entitled to a basic subsistence allowance from the State during the asylum process. If their asylum application is rejected and they cannot get a residence permit on any other grounds, they may have no other option than to remain in the country as an undocumented resident (Schenner et al. 2019, p.83) or be deported. Therefore, exploring the phenomenon of deportation presents a compelling scenario, as the presence of undocumented individuals in the country may necessitate addressing issues related to both voluntary and forced deportation, requiring authorities at various levels to grapple with these challenges. After 2015, asylum applicants in Finland were expected to present their cases minus legal aid, raising questions and criticism about their human rights (Bodström 2020, p.5). Therefore, this study emphasises the 2015-2016 migration crisis case to explain how it influenced the deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as the cases before and after the crisis. The research examines the 2015-2016 crisis in Finland and links the return directive with the MLG of immigration in the context of asylum and refugee deportation in Finland and the EU.

2.5   The Migration Crisis of 2015-2016

According to Mastenbroek et al. (2022, p.1657), "the 2015–2016 refugee crisis posed a severe exogenous shock," resulting in the Member States seeking various solutions immediately and in the future. As a result, the 2015-2016 influx of TCNs into the EU was perceived and defined as a crisis. This research builds on the work of Mastenbroek et al. (2022) by critically examining the crisis in the Finnish context. Also, this research compares how immigration governance occurs during a crisis and how it happens regularly, using the case of deportation as previously stated. This arrival acutely affected the EU and significantly impacted the Nordic countries, remarkably in Sweden and Finland, which took

in more immigrants per capita within the EU (Karldöttir et al. 2018). In the context of the 2015-2016 crisis, an examination of the EU-28 countries revealed that Finland occupied the sixth position in terms of asylum-seekers per capita. This placement positioned Finland behind Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Germany, and Malta, according to the findings presented by Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck in 2018. As a result, in 2015, Finland's number of asylum applicants rose from 3,651 to 32,478, indicating a 790 per cent increment (Perälä and Niemi 2018, p.80); proportionally, the tremendous increase in the European Union. Thus, with its total population, Finland was among the top receivers of asylum-seekers that year (Perälä and Niemi 2018, p.80), making it a compelling case country to study. Before the crisis in 2015, the number of asylum-seekers in Finland typically oscillated between 1,500 and 6,000 annually (Wahlbeck 2019b). During the crisis, however, Finland experienced a tenfold increment in asylum-seekers compared to its regular yearly intake, as stated earlier. Correspondingly, there was an increase in debates concerning immigration that led to tensions, as described above. At the peak of the crisis, Finland's recorded arrivals of 32,478 asylum-seekers was astonishing compared to the usual existing trend. Afterwards, in the second half of 2015, the number of asylum-seekers returned to normal.

According to (Scholten 2018, p.19; Uçarer 2022, p.36), "this crisis posed key challenges in urban governance of migration-related diversity" and, in no doubt, presented severe logistical challenges for receiving countries and the EU as a whole. Not only logistical challenges confronted the EU and the Member States' governing actors; Baldwin-Edwards et al. (2019) explored the nature of the crisis and emphasised that new policies were developed as evidence-based policymaking to know the causes, drivers and consequences of the migration crisis. In a similar argument in their research, Biermann et al. (2019) argued that despite the similarities between the Eurozone and the refugee crises, EU Member States were willing to embrace reforms by changing existing regulatory frameworks. These arguments indicate that the authorities had to deal with policy decision-making and implementation challenges. For example, Chebel d'Appollonia (2019, p.197) argues that "the measures the EU Commission advocated to resolve the crisis" deepened an existing differentiation. On the contrary, Schader (2020) argued that the 2015-2016 crisis should be considered a time of fundamental uncertainty and not a crisis. Notwithstanding Schader's (2020) argument, this period was unprecedented and posed a significant challenge for the EU and the Member States. These challenges arose from the large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees seeking protection. Some scholars argued that the whole phenomenon was exaggerated and dramatised. For example, Hellman and Lerkkanen (2019) claim that

dramaturgy[3] on live TV in Finland created tensions in the political set-ups and the public and presented the influx of migrants in a different context. Similar research by Perälä and Niemi (2018) argued that the crisis was framed as one that confronted the decision-making apparatus in Finland and the EU than a humanitarian crisis. Perälä and Niemi's (2018) research examined the choices of interviews and discussions made by YLE (Finland's National Broadcasting News) during the crisis.

Again, different scholars have examined the crisis by adopting different perspectives and theories. For instance, Hangartner and Sarvimäki's (2017) research reviewed various integration and immigration research on the crisis, focusing on the Finnish case and contrasting it with those of other European countries. Uçarer's (2022, p.36-37) study built on the literature on European migration governance works, such as populist right-wing parties juxtaposing it with the success of the EU–Turkey deal, the nonuse of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), and the demise of the temporary relocation scheme using process tracing methods. Uçarer's article explored the 2015–2016 episode as a recasting of solidarity, a principle of the EU's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Likewise, Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck (2018) assessed the politicisation of the Common European Asylum System for Refugee Relocation, emphasising the role of responsibility during the crisis. Consequently, while previous scholarly inquiries have analysed the realm of European migration governance, with a specific focus on explaining the roles played by key stakeholders and the apportionment of responsibilities within the European Union (EU), a substantive gap persists. This knowledge gap pertains to the domain of deportation policy, specifically in discerning the ramifications of a smaller Member State's actions during the 2015-2016 crisis on the decision-making processes of the EU. The present research endeavours to rectify this existing gap, clarifying the intricate interplay between a specific Member State and the EU in shaping the landscape of deportation policies.

According to Heiman et al. (2019, p.208), in the context of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, the concept of solidarity and burden sharing meant two aspects, namely: firstly, burden sharing between the Member States and secondly, the consequences of the migratory pressures from around the globe. However, the expected loyalty of the Member States in implementing EU policy appears insufficient, especially when the Union's action requires solidarity (Uçarer

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[3] The notion of *dramaturgy* provides a useful logical foundation for discerning the generic room for manoeuvre for mediatized politics within live TV shows. The meaning of 'dramaturgy' is based on the Greek words 'drame' (action and doing) and 'urgy' (process or working) (Cardullo, 2000), signifying the study of dramatic composition and the representation of the main elements of drama on a stage (Hellman and Lerkkanen 2019, p.40).

2022, p.36). Finland contributed to accomplishing the principle of solidarity procedures by fulfilling its responsibility of accepting 1,981 asylum-seekers under the relocation scheme. The Finnish Immigration Service also continually engaged with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) operations by supporting the asylum systems of Italy and Greece during the crisis. These involvements suggest that Finland was active and continues to engage in the EU's efforts to control migration. Such occurrences typically require governance actors and institutions to collaborate well-coordinatedly to govern the situation. The research by Heiman et al. (2019) analysed the deadlock between the Member States regarding political solidarity during the crisis. However, "Member States' stances towards EU law or its implementation can change due to exogenous shocks and changing domestic political incentives", as Mastenbroek et al. (2022, p.1657) argued. Earlier research by Vataman (2016) highlighted how Member States implement EU asylum and migration law with particular emphasis on the initiatives of the European Commission and the EU's actions and measures during the 2015-2016 crisis (Doliwa-Klepacka and Zdanowicz 2020). However, research on how Finland interacted with the EU and the local actors on a multilevel during the crisis to implement policy decisions remains scant. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how Finland reacted to the shock and cooperated with the EU in addressing the challenges faced. Furthermore, most national and EU initiatives allegedly designed to address the current refugee crisis have added further chaos to an already multilayered system (Chebel d'Appollonia 2019, p.193). This research clarifies this pandemonium by explicitly analysing the Finnish situation in the EU context.

The EU's perspective presents other dimensions of the challenges; for instance, a study by Paynter (2022) applied tools of narrative and discourse to examine the 2015-2016 migration crisis within the EU. Her research drew on Balibar's notion of 'crisis racism' in determining how migrants were dealt with in Italy. That is, Italy racialised the crisis due to how they treated the migrants. Campomori and Ambrosini (2020) also, in discussing the implementation of asylum-seekers' reception in Italy, used the concept of 'battleground' to group the interaction among the various actors on a multilevel and horizontal level of governance. Ambrosini (2021, p.375), however, noted that:

> against these backdrop of challenges, a widespread perception is that the governance of asylum has become more complex and even chaotic, even if its outcomes generally appear to fall very short of coherent respect for human rights and international conventions in affluent Western countries.

The crisis scenario has instigated diverse academic discussions, with proponents advocating for diverse approaches, theories, and concepts to emphasise policy implementation. This study contributes to these studies by employing a social constructivist perspective to analyse the crisis within the Finnish-European Union MLG nexus context.

2.6   Summary

Complex issues ensuing from the increasing number of asylum-seekers and refugees demand a multilevel governance approach. This research examines the dynamics of these intricate issues in the Finnish and the EU context. That is, how governance actors collaborated and coordinated their joint efforts and policies to address issues associated with deportation before, during and after the 2015-2016 migration crisis. Different scholars have used different theoretical and conceptual approaches in analysing immigration. MLG is a framework that several academicians have used to explain different kinds of relationships between the EU and its Member States in diverse policy fields. This study contributes to the knowledge of MLG by looking at how a smaller Member State's actors contribute to this complex relationship in the field of immigration. The study also proposes a model or framework incorporating decision-making and implementation of immigration policies in Finland and the EU, as seen in Figure 4.

This thesis evaluates how the various institutions responsible for immigration governance interact at different levels in Finland and the EU to attain a common goal. King and Lulle (2016) argue that stronger cooperation is needed between the EU and the Member States to achieve a uniform policy on immigration that will enhance the governance of immigration. Consequently, the EU has struggled for over 20 years to harmonise the migration policies of the Member States and has achieved free movement of its citizens between the Member States (Geddes and Scholten 2016). However, there is more work to do concerning harmonising the Member States' migration policies concerning external borders with third-country nationals. This difficulty is because there have been several unsuccessful attempts, and the Member States are also reluctant to hand over that aspect of governance to the EU because they are keen on restricting immigration and maintaining their sovereignty (Bomberg and Stubb 2003). European migration policies, thus, affect state sovereignty internally and externally.

For instance, the abolition of internal migration policies implied by freedom of movement deprives the Member States of their sovereignty over the admission of EU citizens and long-term resident third-country nationals (Lavenex 2019, p.568). Legrain's (2016) study

emphasised the cost and consequences of restricting migration into the EU. Due to these restrictions, there is a need to ensure that the EU's external borders are strictly regulated and that the Member States implement policies such as deportation. For example, the recent 2015-2016 migration crisis prompted policymakers to respond urgently to the migration challenges (King and Lulle 2016) and implement policies within a fast-paced environment. However, Wolff (2020, p.249) argued that the public servants continued with business as usual amid the crisis, but the status quo of preventive policies and border controls prevailed. Since then, the European Commission has delineated its agenda on the swift responses needed currently and in the future to address the Mediterranean crisis and all other aspects of migration (Terrón and Pinyol 2018).

The next chapter examines the social constructivism theory and delves into the intricacies of multilevel governance dynamics. It assesses the applicability of this theoretical framework within the context of MLG interactions among institutions, elucidating the rationale behind selecting this particular perspective and conceptual framework. Subsequently, the chapter explains the methods and methodology employed to achieve the research's overarching objective, shedding light on the essential tools for unravelling the dynamics and complexities inherent in immigration governance.

CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE RESEARCH PROCESS

3.0   Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the various concepts and broad themes within which this research is embedded and the gaps in literature. It showed how and why it is necessary to address the EU immigration problems on a multilevel. This chapter outlines the use of MLG as a heuristic tool and social constructivism as a theory to analyse immigration governance by various institutions at different levels of governance in Finland and the ceding of authority upwards to the EU. It, thus, discusses what MLG is about, various perceptions, relevance, criticisms, classification and the implications of the framework. This discussion involves using social constructivism as the theoretical framework to support, critique and strengthen the synergy between the theory and the conceptual tool in the research. It also discusses the research methods and methodologies employed in arriving at the data, analysis, discussions and conclusion, which includes an explanation of Elite interviewing (gaining access to interviewees). Data analysis, interpretation processes and issues about the research's validity, reliability and generalizability follow.

Theories and concepts shape how the EU's decision and policymaking apparatus can be explained (Pollack 2020). In this study, MLG depicts how immigration governance dynamics flow from and within the local and national levels of governance in Finland through to the supranational level (the EU) and vice-versa. The rationale for adopting this heuristic tool as the conceptual framework for this research is to illustrate how interactions among various actors occur. That is, Vlassis (2022) argues that governance outcomes are not solely derived from the institutional configuration of actors but rather from their interplay with one another. The social constructivism theory thus explains the nature and complexity of interactions that occur between and among these actors engaged in a multilevel relationship. Per the social constructivism theory, individuals and groups actively construct the realities of their social world through shared meanings and interpretations (Sørsveen and Ursin 2021). This claim by constructivists has led to one of the generalisations associated with the theory that all knowledge is constructed (Lesh et al. 2003). In the context of immigration governance, this theory implies that actors contribute to the creation of knowledge, perspectives, and decisions through their interactions. Different actors, thus, socially construct the realities of interactions, which generate knowledge, perspectives and decisions that are used in immigration governance (Omodan and Tsotetsi 2020). The

eventualities of these social exchanges influence what becomes valid explanations of MLG in immigration governance.

Constructivism aligns closely with the characteristics of MLG, and this alignment holds significance due to the increasing disparities between the theories of EU studies and European MLG (Búzás 2006). These disparities manifest themselves in the complex decision-making processes of the EU, the role of non-state actors, local and regional influence, as well as informal practices and norms. The implication is that the orientation between constructivism and MLG is significant because constructivism provides a theoretical lens that better adapts to the complexity and nuances of MLG. It thus helps to address the increasing disparities between traditional EU theories and the empirical realities of how governance actually operates in the EU context. Similarly, Saurugger and Mérand (2010) contend that MLG has been influenced by the constructivist perspective, which emphasises the concern for how norms solidify in particular domains. Búzás (2006, p.51) further argues that governance manifests across various tiers, encompasses diverse subjects, and methods, aligning with MLG. However, in every instance, the outcome is the generation or reproduction of "social order". Given that these constructivist approaches do not exclusively adhere to a singular governance level, they are amenable to incorporating MLG. These arguments support the choice of MLG and social constructivism as the conceptual and theoretical framework, respectively, in answering the questions of this study.

3.1 Principles of the Social Constructivism Theory

The fundamental idea of social constructivism theory posits that human knowledge evolves through the dynamic interplay among interacting actors (Fox 2001; Kanselaar 2002). This theoretical and analytical instrument explores the process through which humans generate diverse knowledge and meaning, leading to the formulation of objective truths about various phenomena (Fox 2001; Sørsveen and Ursin 2021). Constructivists contend that the social realm is a product of human agency, asserting that states actively shape their political identities and retain the capacity to exert influence across various domains (Iwuoho and Mbaegbu 2021). In recent times, constructivists have tended to theorise about social interactions, which implicitly implies a return to agency and decision-making (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001). These social interactions, over a long period, lead to socialisation among the actors; thus, the longer actors engage in interaction, the more likely socialisation will take place. The challenge of socialisation, however, is in specifying the conditions, time and mechanisms through which they occur (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001). The constructivist perspective, with a focus on actors, centres on the examination of actor interactions as a

means to comprehend the structuring of inter-organisational cooperation (Vlassis 2022). According to Maslow and Nakamura (2008, p.135),

> Wendt defined constructivism as a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims : (1) States are the principal unit of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the State system are intersubjective rather than material; and (3) State identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics.

The proponents of this theory believe that learning takes place in social and cultural settings instead of solely within the individual, which rationalists proclaim (Omodan and Tsotetsi 2020; Abdullah Alkhabra 2022). The constructivist approach provides an understanding of the motivations guiding actors involved in interactions (Servent 2011) and the development of knowledge through social negotiations and communications (Maslow and Nakamura 2008; Abdullah Alkhabra 2022). This assertion underscores the utility of the constructivist approach in emphasising the motivations that drive actors engaged in social and political interactions, viz, its main focus is on dyads. It suggests that by adopting a constructivist lens, researchers and analysts can gain a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and cognitive factors that influence human behaviour in these various contexts (Omodan and Tsotetsi 2020). This approach recognises the subjective nature of reality and emphasises the importance of shared meanings and interpretations in shaping individuals' motivations and actions (Abdullah Alkhabra 2022) in governance. While many authors recognised as classics in social constructivism may not have directly discussed governance, their insights in that domain are indeed valuable (Búzás 2006).

Constructivism envisages collective purposes and outcomes by providing an understanding of preferences beyond individual decision-making that aligns more with the rationalist perspective (Maslow and Nakamura 2008; Servent 2011). Rational choice theory inadequately addresses fundamental actor properties, as it relies on a robust form of methodological individualism that simplifies interactions to strategic exchanges among actors with inherent "pre-social" characteristics (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001, p.220). It is notable that while rational choice institutionalism can proficiently elucidate processes such as bargaining, coalition formation, and individual decision-making, constructivist perspectives may offer a more nuanced comprehension of the factors influencing the acceptability of particular choices. That is, the primary motivation behind ineffective cooperation and the willingness of certain Member States to assume disproportionate responsibilities can be most effectively elucidated through the lens of collective action and

its inherent incentive structures (Niemann and Zaun 2018). In essence, constructivism's inclination to question commonly accepted notions serves as a significant advantage in analysing governance. This approach is crucial as it is an effective means through which we can unveil the concealed power structures that underpin a specific form of governance (Búzás 2006), MLG in this study.

Additionally, constructivist analyses can shed light on the underlying reasons for the absence of certain coalitions or outcomes. Therefore, constructivism might provide the context and depth that some rational-choice models lack, thereby complementing and challenging our acquired knowledge of EU institutions. Maslow and Nakamura (2008) contend that constructivism elucidates the process by which individuals form 'perceptions' of both the 'self' and the 'other' through social interactions, thereby challenging and subverting the conventional structure-process paradigm associated with rationalism. For example, proponents of constructivism underscore the heightened flexibility in the shaping of states' identities and preferences, surpassing the constraints delineated within the framework of mainstream rationalism theory (Iwuoho and Mbaegbu 2021)

The constructivist perspective aims to clarify and examine variations in preferences, the diverse range of strategies, and the characteristics of actors over both spatial and temporal dimensions (Maslow and Nakamura 2008). Noteworthy among these attributes is intersubjectivity, a factor that shapes the behaviours of actors, ultimately leading to the formation of "collective meaning," a fundamental principle of constructivism (Maslow and Nakamura 2008, p.136). Pollack (2020, p.23) contended that scholars adhering to the constructivist paradigm have generated a series of empirical studies with the explicit aim of rigorously testing hypotheses related to "socialisation, norm diffusion", and the formation of collective preferences within the European Union. These investigations employ a diverse array of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. This study, however, uses qualitative methods to explain immigration governance, specifically the multilevel relationships between actors in Finland and their EU counterparts from a constructivist perspective.

3.2   The Nature and Perspectives on Multilevel Governance (MLG)

Research on governance and the EU is relatively common among academics (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006). Kohler-Koch and Rittberger (2006) argue that a well-known framework of the EU is the multilevel governance, which Marks Gary (see Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006, p.34) developed in the 1990s. This concept emerged initially in the context

of the regional integration of the EU to comprehend the policymaking processes and structures by actors at different levels of jurisdiction. The original idea of "levels" referred to the "downwards vertical dimension of interaction" (Maggetti and Trein 2019, pp. 355-356), which reflected the common top-down approach in a government hierarchy. The concept of MLG, over time, expanded from the downward vertical dimension to include a framework for visualising how local, regional, national and supranational governmental institutions share competencies at and across diverse levels (Maggetti and Trein 2019). Consequently, it broadened to encompass all regulations and institutions, such as public-private partnerships, non-state actors, and NGOs (Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Zapata-Barrero et al. 2017; Ponzo 2017; DeBardeleben 2012; Maggetti and Trein 2019). This expansion meant synchronisation across the various policy fields while including different actors became crucial to enhancing the development and implementation of policies within the EU (Maslow and Nakamura 2008; Joki and Wolffhardt 2017).

MLG interactions empower supranational, sub-national and non-governmental actors to the extent of obscuring the sovereignty of the Member States' national governments in domestic and international affairs (Jeffery and Peterson 2020; DeBardeleben 2012). Jessop (2013, p.14) argued that MLG accepts the "de-nationalisation of statehood, the de-statization of politics, and the re-articulation of territorial and functional powers". Therefore, MLG interactions show the trends within the EU, such as how the states are not the only agents responsible for policy decision-making and implementation in recent times (Eising 2008; Daniell and Kay 2017). Búzás (2006) argued similarly that many state interests are not inherent but instead constructed and subject to change. In such situations, it is crucial to understand and manage MLG interactions if public policy outcomes are to be effective (Daniell and Kay 2017). Hooghe and Mark's (2006) argument supports the idea that for governance to be efficient, it must occur at a multilevel. This argument implies that constructivists emphasise "the mutual constitutions between ideational structures and agents" (Iwuoha and Mbaegbu 2021, p.277). Vlassis (2022) argues that the key to comprehending the dynamics of inter-organisational cooperation is found in the interactions among various stakeholders engaged in political and social negotiations and legitimisation processes, thus endorsing this proposition.

The proposition does not advocate for governance beyond the state level, which would necessitate the establishment of distinct governmental frameworks above the State. Instead, it supports governance that extends beyond the State, as articulated by Aälberts (2004). This assertion implies that the EU is not evolving into a superior government above individual states. Instead, it is a network of sovereign states seeking to make decisions with a more

extensive support foundation (Dolinar 2010), transcending their national jurisdictions. For instance, the EU institutions, such as the European Parliament and the European Commission, cannot and should not act as replacements for national governments (Dolinar 2010). Consequently, "the governance of complex national social problems" such as immigration, economic crisis, labour standards and climate changes usually require multifaceted governance levels to deliberate, negotiate, enact and implement policies and decisions (Blank 2009; Scholten 2012, p.217). There are two paradigm shifts in MLG, according to Tortola (2017). The first is an MLG concept built to show the dispersal of political authority and how their functions are constantly evolving across the globe. Secondly, MLG seeks to reveal the creation and execution of public policies through the interaction of multiple actors. This research aligns with both paradigms in seeking answers to how the MLG of immigration functions when Finland (national and local level actors) interacts with the EU on an everyday basis and during times of crisis.

Bisong (2019, p.1306) argued that "the concepts of power relations and power-sharing" cannot portray the collaborations between institutions and the State. However, MLG captures interactions between actors at and across different levels and connects thematic areas and common or diverse interests. This interconnectedness within the MLG relationship distinguishes it from, for instance, federalism and decentralisation concepts (Tortola 2017). According to Aälberts (2004), MLG interactions involve a tripartite transfer of authority away from the national governments. That is, authority is transferred upwards to the supranational level because of the EU's integration, downwards to the sub-national level due to their empowerment, and sideways because of partnerships (for instance, public-private partnerships). Aälberts (2004) again argued that since various actors at diverse levels become engaged in the MLG of immigration, national governments per se do not have the final authority in the problem-solving process. In contrast, Jeffery and Peterson (2020, p.761-762) contend that the fact that many actors are consulted in MLG does not also suggest that they have power or influence over policy. Nevertheless, within the framework of social constructivism, collaborative consultation recognises the individual perspectives participants contribute to the consultation process. It underscores the significance of engaging in dialogue to clarify and refine ideas, as emphasised by Cobern (1993). This argument supports the blend of social constructivism and MLG in this study. Conceptually, governing policy problems enhances the understanding of MLG's problem-solving capacity and problem-generating potential. Thus, the macro-dynamism of MLG is understood better when this perspective is adopted (Maggetti and Trein 2019). Maggetti and Trein (2019, p. 366) contended that MLG offers "a coherent framework to understand interconnected

processes of denationalisation, fragmentation and disaggregation, but also of recentering, reintegration and re-coordination". MLG, as a heuristic tool, is, therefore, employed in this research to depict the complex processes involved in deporting asylum and refugees who migrate into the EU, particularly into Finland. It also pictorially reveals the pragmatic decision-making and implementation of the return directive regarding immigration at diverse levels and actors, especially during the EU migration crisis of 2015.

Overall, this research seeks to evaluate and analyse the nature, complexities and dynamics of immigration governance interactions among diverse actors in Finland relative to Finland's connections with the EU in migration decision-making and implementation. Likewise, it examines how the EU's migration policies affect Finland's domestic ones. That is, Finland, a Member State of the EU, has domestic immigration policies that mirror the EU's immigration policies. However, decisions taken and implemented at the national level in Finland and the EU level either conform or conflict. The Member States remain autonomous sovereign states, indicating that, although they follow the EU's rules and regulations, they can sanction their policies and decisions, which are always based on Member States' consent (Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck 2018). For instance, Aälberts (2004) argued that the state remains a key performer in the EU's policymaking and implementation stage at the domestic level and must not be considered only as one of the crucial actors in the MLG relationship. Jefferey and Peterson (2020, p.761), thus, question why States pool sovereignty or even remain members of the Union. The claims above seem to defeat the purpose of the MLG concept; however, its usage in this research is to showcase the dynamics and complexity of policy decision-making and implementation by institutions in Finland and the EU concerning immigration governance. Bucken-Knapp et al. (2018) elaborated that various governance responses are possible at any level, leading to coordination and decisive roles in policy implementation.

Pollack (2005) acknowledged that governance in the EU emphasises the EU's ability to adopt deliberative and convincing means, in which policy implementation takes a different form than the status quo. In this research, the issue of governance (MLG) raises new analytical and normative questions, including how fragmentation, cooperation, collaboration, and governing accountability affect decision-making and policy implementation. Therefore, this research will contribute to the literature on the use of MLG as a heuristic tool that implicitly or explicitly assists in portraying the challenges of managing immigration. Blank (2009) established that MLG interactions involve more than merely displaying how negotiations, conflicts and agreements occur between hierarchical

tiers of government. It extends to show how non-hierarchical levels and non-governmental actors participate actively in the multilevel relationship (Jeffery and Peterson 2020).

3.3   The Significance and Implications of MLG and Social Constructivism

MLG concept was developed initially to portray how the EU governs/rules Member States' activities and how the activities of the Member States influence the EU's policies. That is, how they conjointly manage policies and make decisions at diverse levels. The actors substantively engage in the MLG relationship at all levels and not only display their presence (Bucken-Knapp et al. 2018). For instance, research by the OECD (2018) argued that administering the problems associated with asylum-seeking and refugee protection demands that the authorities accept the mandates across all levels of governance. Bucken-Knapp et al. (2018) further explained that the actors mutually depend on each other in the policymaking and decision-making processes as these activities are intertwined, a perspective that has a constructivist connotation. However, the MLG concept has extended to different fields of application, such as "the growing importance of transnational networks, global regulators and civil society initiatives beyond the state" (Maggetti and Trein 2019, p. 357). Various actors and institutions engaged in the comprehensive management of migration are responsible for executing policy decisions within Finland. Concurrently, the EU has influenced the manner in which Finland responds to its internal policy modifications. The examination of these dynamics holds significance in this research in understanding the MLG level within which these interactions occur.

Porumbescu (2019) also analysed MLG interaction as a liaison between national sovereignty and the usual EU ways of approaching issues regarding the security of the states. MLG thus shows how states regard and govern matters relating to international migration and how the EU influences it. This present research aligns closely with Porumbescu's (2019) study because it shows how Finland (a sovereign state) governs immigration and how the EU influences these dynamics and vice versa. In a similar vein, Vanhoonacker and Neuhold's (2015) research paid attention to the dynamics across and within EU institutions and different levels of governance. Vanhoonacker and Neuhold's (2015) examined the factors that facilitate the success or failure of cooperation. However, this research examines collaboration among the diverse institutions governing immigration in Finland and their interactions with institutions at the supranational level. It investigates the dynamics of policy developments and decision implementations at various levels of the MLG relationship.

Again, Tortola (2017) argues that applying MLG to institutional settings other than the supranational EU is unclear (See also Jeffery and Peterson 2020). Using MLG in this study, however, highlights this blurriness of authority issue and clarifies the nature of the relationship between Finland and the EU from a constructivist perspective. This research did not use the 'New Institutionalism', for instance, because although it encompasses a wide range of institutions, it only concentrates on enabling formal and non-formal rules on the behaviours of individuals or groups (Nugent 2017). Historical Institutionalists focus on understanding and clarifying specific real-world political outcomes. They view institutions as pivotal elements for waging conflicts over interests, ideologies, and power. Institutions thus play a crucial role in historical institutionalist analysis because they serve as focal points for much political activity and establish incentives and limitations for political actors, thereby shaping the nature of that activity. In essence, Historical Institutionalists aim to cultivate a profound and contextualised understanding of politics and not governance (Steinmo 2001). Nevertheless, Tortola's (2017, p.234) research on MLG was "an attempt to stimulate the methodological discussions of the idea of MLG and presents a critical reconstruction of the concept structured around three' axes of ambiguity". These concepts include the applicability of MLG beyond the EU, the role of non-state actors, and the focus on policymaking structures versus processes followed by a conceptual assessment and clarification strategy (Tortola 2017). However, this research uses MLG to understand its empirical applicability in the returns decision-making and implementation regarding asylum-seekers and refugees, involving the local and national levels in Finland and beyond to the EU level within a social-political (constructivist) setting. The application of the constructivist theory thus manifests itself effectively in practical MLG contexts (Cobern 1993).

Research by Maggetti and Trein (2019, p.355) suggests that the "governance of problems" affects the dynamics of MLG institutions. That means institutions must change their settings and positions to accommodate the decisions and actions taken during their MLG interactions. Maggetti and Trein (2019, p.355) argued that the "problem-solving" aspect of the MLG tool re-emerged in the wake of the 2007-08 financial and economic crisis after having waned off for some time. This assertion was about the 2015 migration crisis, which created the need for "cross-sectoral" coordination within municipalities and multilevel coordination across all levels of government. In line with this argument, this research focuses on the governance of immigration within the EU, particularly in Finland. It investigates how the governance of this problem shapes Finland's institutional dynamism and its relationship with the EU within the MLG framework. Multilevel systems are not dynamic simply because of

misunderstandings and conflicts of interest arising in the relationship but because of their potential to facilitate joint actions. Thus, conceptually, MLG arrangements encourage governance beyond the boundaries of the state or national governments in solving policy impasses (Daniell and Kay 2017). Using the MLG concept in this study is to apply it practically to facilitate a better understanding of these arrangements. Simultaneously, the actor-centred constructivist approach represents a dynamic framework tailored to contemporary power dynamics among engaged actors, characterised by ongoing negotiation, reciprocal interactions, and political confrontations (Vlassis 2022).

Ideally, MLG can facilitate the interpretation of policy learning as interactions occur among the various governance levels, helping build trust among them (Daniell and Kay 2017), which is a key aspect of the constructivist theory. For instance, as Porumbescu (2019, p.35) argued, the "social reality" of the occurrence of mass migration necessitates that the issue is resolved through coordination at various levels of governance (local, national, regional and supranational levels). The actors at these levels are interacting continuously through governance as they construct these social realities (Búzás 2006). These arguments are significant reasons for adopting the social constructivism theory to explain, critique and expand on the MLG of immigration in this research. This research argues for using MLG of immigration governance in Finland and the EU to depict how policy coordination and collaboration in joint decision execution takes place. It, therefore, potentially aligns with the use of MLG by Porumbescu, as asserted above, but on three levels (excluding the regional level). Hence, considering that various institutions in Finland are involved in policy decision-making and implementation regarding immigration, MLG interactions will facilitate the coordination of activities towards building trust and commitment among the involved actors at different levels. Spehar et al. (2017) support this contention that some form of policy decision is developed at each level.

Bache and Flinders (2004) (see also Agh 2010, p.6) presented MLG as a conceptual reaction to the EU's emergence as a multilevel entity, supporting the argument for MLG as a utility concept. MLG's utility has led to the distribution of power vertically towards new levels of governance and horizontally to new non-state actors, leading to increased interdependency in both (Hooghe and Marks 2001; Bache and Flinders 2004; Agh 2010) distribution. In this research, MLG's utility explains the diverse relationships between Finland's national government, various immigration management institutions at national and sub-national levels, and their supranational counterpart, the EU. This clarification supports Joki and Wolffhardt's (2017) arguments that diverse actors like NGOs, quasi-administrative bodies, businesses and corporate interest groups, and some loosely formed social movements are

steadily penetrating all levels. Hence, the understanding of the EU is no longer about a sovereign and modern state system; rather, it is perceived as sharing competencies at various levels of authority (Murphy 2008; Ponzo 2017).

Another significant issue remains that the EU Member States retain sovereign power while the EU aims to have more decisional capacity. This sovereignty battle can lead to a situation where balancing power becomes a complicated reality in the governance of immigration (Porumbescu 2019). MLG, therefore, offers an understanding of the views that supranational bodies should not act in the position of national governments at the national level (Dolinar 2010), making the relationship more complex. This assertion implies that although countless issues could be better resolved at the EU level, not only immigration (where MLG faces its biggest challenge), it is not the case. Contrary to the claims of intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism, MLG highlights the role of the supranational institutions as having impacts on policy decision-making and implementation within Member States' jurisdiction (Aälberts 2004; Saurugger and Mérand 2010). MLG has, thus, demonstrated its usefulness in capturing and breaking down the complexities of distinguishing between national and transnational politics. This interpretation facilitates the analysis and implications of the relationships between governance at numerous levels (Agh 2010) from a constructivist lens.

The delicate nature of international migration, its causes and consequences, and the complexity of dealing with mass migration complicate decision-making. As noted above, this complexity is due to the fact that the Member States' sovereign interests conflict with the EU's shared interests (Porumbescu 2019; Panebianco 2022). Member States are cognisant of the legal limitations imposed upon them at both national and international levels (Niemann and Zaun 2018). The MLG concept, however, is one of the limited approaches that absorbs 'crisis' at one end of its spectrum and 'ordinary' life at the other to explain how crisis develops politically, institutionally, nationally and legally (Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk 2019). It thus offers some degree of flexibility in governance, which is a principal factor in considering it (Hooghe and Marks 2003) together with the social constructivism theory in analysing this research's questions.

Ultimately, the sharing of competencies, visions and ambitions among the various levels accounts for the inclusion of local levels in achieving overall targets. The reality is that effectively managing immigration, particularly mass migration, requires different action levels (Porumbescu 2019). Such problems allow for the use of MLG interactions to attain its potential. Therefore, MLG interactions promote security and stability, enticing investments and creating fiscal mechanisms favourable toward immigration governance. If conducted

effectively, MLG interactions also enhance effective communication among the various actors, which prevents conflicts. Maggetti and Trein (2019, p.355), however, argue that the "problem-solving capacity" and the "problem-generating potential" of MLG activities could result in further downwards, upwards and sideways allocation of authority. This downward trend can reconfigure the multilevel structure of political arrangements in an inward-moving or outward-moving outlook (Maggetti and Trein 2019).

3.3.1 Why the MLG Concept and the Social Constructivism Theory

This study employs MLG as the conceptual framework because of its appropriateness in illustrating the complex dynamics among the EU Member States' national level authorities, regional entities, local bodies, and non-governmental actors. Simultaneously, social constructivism is employed to clarify the complex interplay within this relationship. MLG depicts the complex relationship between all the actors on each level, combining concepts from federalism and intergovernmentalism to expand on its multilevel nature (Agh 2010). The concept challenges both neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism because they are theories of integration rather than governance (Búzás 2006). The statement suggests that there is a gap in the existing theoretical frameworks for understanding the governance dynamics within the EU and that a broader outlook beyond just integration theories is required to grasp the complexities of EU governance. According to Blank (2009), federalism emphasises one particular level (usually the national level) over all the others interacting. Federalism, thus, emphasises "the relationship between the central government and a tier of sub-national governments" (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; 2003, p.8). Therefore, federalism is more inclined towards theoretical and historical debates about nationalism, shying away from global entities and collaboration (Blank 2009). Likewise, intergovernmentalism inadequately addresses multilevel interactions as it focuses on capturing multiple interactions within a single-level intergovernmental framework (Búzás 2006, Agh 2010) and instead denies multiple-level analysis of governance (Búzás 2006). Social constructivism, however, underscores the inherent limitations of conventional analytical frameworks (Iwuoha and Mbaegbu 2021), making it the appropriate theoretical tool for this study. For instance, Cobern (1993) highlighted the relevance of social constructivism in exploring new paradigms for collaborative interactions and applying research methodologies to facilitate governance. Constructivism serves as a robust theoretical framework, offering justification beyond intuitive reasoning for these practices and providing avenues for further research.

Kohler-Koch and Rittberger (2006) contend that multiple research have described the EU system of governance as containing a mixture of numerous actors in a multilevel and non-

hierarchical relationship. In this research, various multilevel actors are involved, hence the choice of MLG. MLG shows not only the vertical dispersion of authority but also the task-specific and flexible arrangements existing within the horizontal levels, as well as public and private responsibility sharing. It provides a logical structure for analysing the interconnected processes of all the different levels of actors (Maggetti and Trein 2019) using the social constructivism theory. By incorporating social constructivism theory, the analysis of MLG becomes more nuanced, as it considers not only the formal structures and arrangements but also the socially constructed meanings, norms, and power relations that underpin governance processes. This framework illustrates the characteristics of the relationship between the interacting actors governing immigration or the territorial levels identified (Porumbescu 2019; Aalberts 2004). The constructivist paradigm clarifies this manifestation of MLG by positing that interactions occur among an array of alliances, actors, identities, interests, and agendas, which extends beyond conventional boundaries (Iwuoha and Mbaegbu 2021). Therefore, transnational interactions are essential within the chosen framework (DeBardeleben 2012). MLG has, since the 90s, become the dominant mainstream conceptual framework in various EU studies, international relations, and policy studies on the EU (Agh 2010). Applying MLG is to visualise the interactions between authorities governing immigration at different levels, unlike the Europeanisation studies that maintain the pragmatic separation of these layers (Eising 2008).

MLG interactions are essential for attaining the EU's ambitions of balanced and sustainable economic growth and its ideals of solidarity, social and territorial cohesion through the effective coordination and integration of policies and decision-making procedures at all levels of government (European Committee of the Regions 2019; Spehar et al. 2017; Mancheva et al. 2023). Similarly, the MLG relationship is crucial for harmonising and coordinating the efforts of the actors in the Finnish institutions managing immigration. Dolinar (2010, p.98) underscored the imperative of systematically addressing pivotal concerns within the methodological, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks, which this research aligns with. These concerns encompass the intricate nature of decision-making processes inherent in MLG, the impact of anticipated outcomes on the decision-making mechanisms employed by EU Member States, and the discernment of power dynamics determining influence. Furthermore, a nuanced understanding of the substantive contributions of non-governmental actors is indispensable for a more profound understanding of the dynamics characterising immigration governance in both Finland and the broader EU context. Hence, through expanding the theoretical scope beyond causation and empirical data and emphasising the generative impacts of "social and [political]

institutions, structures, intersubjective norms, rules, and practices, constructivism" ultimately establishes a more comprehensive epistemological and ontological foundation, thereby possessing more significant potential for enhanced explanatory efficacy (Búzás 2006, pp.54-55).

3.3.2 The Essence of MLG of Immigration in Finland and the EU

Introducing MLG into EU studies represented the end of an era in which the EU and Member States' politics were studied in isolation (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006). The idea of MLG originated from the study of the EU's policymaking with the understanding that there are negotiations between actors at different levels and fragmentations of political power and competencies with its attendant empowerment of informal actors (Maggetti and Trein 2019; Daniell and Kay 2017). MLG, thus, unified the Europeanization study approach by simultaneously exploring the EU and the Member States' political systems, which is another good reason for choosing MLG for this study. Pollack (2005) contended that, in practice, MLG showcases Europeanization as a process that explains how EU institutions and policies affect the policies of the Member States. Pollack (2005, p.380) further argued that:

> A comparative approach posits the EU as a political system in which formal rules shape the behaviours of governmental and non-governmental actors. In contrast, in the governance approach, the EU's governance is a non-hierarchical mobilising network of private and public actors who engage in deliberations and problem-solving efforts guided by informal and formal rules and institutions.

From the claim above, this research aligns with the governance approach of MLG to explain immigration governance in Finland and the EU. For the past couple of years, migration (particularly immigration) has emerged among the major concerns of European citizens (Porumbescu 2019). For instance, since the beginning of 2013, Europe has experienced one of its tremendous influxes of immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. These different groups of people are fleeing poverty, political instability, violent conflicts, human rights abuses and droughts, among other causes, from the Middle East, Asia and Africa (Andreescu 2017). In accordance with Andreescu's (2017) analysis, approximately 1.8 million migrants undertook border crossings or attempted to do so in the year 2015 alone, a concerning statistic designated as a crisis by both the EU and its Member States. This occurrence posed a significant challenge to the EU's preparedness in managing a crisis of such scale. In this context, the supranational level was perceived as lacking a viable or prospective resolution to address the crisis. What makes the situation worse is that the problems of immigration do not originate from within the boundaries of the EU alone but rather from the international

communities. This external problem makes it difficult for the EU to enact measures to prevent such happenings within its territory. This lack of control is due to international and humanitarian rules and regulations that are considered in such dealings (Porumbescu 2019). For instance, Finland's migration policy and its associated legislation are not enacted by relying only on the basic human rights measures provided in its constitution. It also considers the EU's regulations, international human rights, and other treaties to which Finland is a signatory (Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior 2018). Generally, MLG depicts a variety of actors across different levels who are consistently involved in ongoing negotiations, deliberations, and the execution of decisions (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2018). This configuration makes MLG a suitable framework for conceptualising immigration governance in Finland and the EU. Bisong (2019) contends that MLG manifests itself through numerous interactions beyond the purview of the State, occurring at subnational and transnational institutional levels. However, as previously discussed, it is essential to recognise the challenge states face in relinquishing sovereignty over immigration management. Consequently, states often resort to mechanisms such as bilateral negotiations, regional agreements, and cooperation (Bisong, 2019).

3.4   MLG Classifications

MLG is classified into Types I and II MLG. The two types differ in how they process policy problems and their solutions to deal with them. The table below summarises the differences between the types of MLG.

Table 1 Differences between the types of MLG

Type I	Type II
General-purpose jurisdiction	Task-specific jurisdiction
Non-intersecting membership	Intersecting membership
Jurisdiction organised in a limited number of level	No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
System-wide architecture	Flexible design

Source: (Hooghe and Marks 2003)

Type I describes an exclusive, permanent system and general purpose administration at a limited number of levels, for instance, the non-overlapping jurisdiction at the international,

national, EU, regional and local levels. It developed from the idea of federalism, whereby authority distribution among a limited number of commands occurs at a narrower number of levels (Hooghe and Marks 2001; 2003; Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk 2019). Although Type I governance is the brainchild of federalism, it is not limited to federalism. It also captures the idea of governance among EU Scholars. One school of thought (Dolinar 2010) attributes MLG's development, thus its contents and practicality, to the German states (Länder). Another school of thought is that Gary Marks propounded the paradigm specifically for the EU's structural and cohesion policies (Pollack 2005). Within the EU, Type I MLG manifests itself through the reinforcement of institutions at both supranational and sub-national tiers. This framework introduces hierarchical elements in instances of complexity, necessitating intervention for definitive resolutions. Its efficacy lies in streamlining the coordination of governance, minimising administrative redundancies, and implementing multitasking strategies across non-overlapping territorial domains (Hooghe and Marks 2001, 2003). Furthermore, Type I MLG underscores collaborative decision-making, concurrently adhering to the organisational principles of subsidiarity (Leo and August 2009). Type I problems include conflicts about policy proficiencies, funding, and implementation practices among the diverse levels and can cause dynamism within the MLG relationship (Maggetti and Trein 2019).

On the other hand, Type II denotes "specialised" jurisdictions operating across all the levels (Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk 2019, p.1231). It is characterised by more complex piecemeal jurisdictions of overlapping, task-specific and intentional flexible linkages among the levels. They are temporarily instituted to serve a purpose(s) of governance, react to citizens' varying preferences, and disappear afterwards (Hooghe and Marks 2001; Leo and August 2009). Type II MLG addresses functional levels and illustrates the transformation of governance into a networked mode. Such network modes occur across specific competencies, which has given rise to using "soft policy instruments" in policymaking at the regional levels (Bisong 2019, p.1297). States are opting for this due to its flexibility, which introduces "market mechanisms" into the approach to increase efficiency and maximise personal choices (Hooghe and Marks 2003, p.16; Leo and August 2009, p.492). Hence, Type II MLG addresses functional levels and illustrates the transformation of governance into a networked mode.

The EU combines types I and II MLG in its jurisdictional mandates (Hooghe and Marks 2001). The ideal type of MLG would refer to the interaction, joint coordination, and collaboration among actors at diverse levels without any particular level dominating the relationship. This kind of MLG means avenues are created through networks and forums to

engage participants actively (Ponzo 2017). This research applies the combination of Type I and Type II MLG to represent the collaboration and coordination of various decisions and immigration policy implementation in Finland and the EU.

3.5   The Concepts of Decision-making and Policy Implementation

The roles and impacts of institutions in policy decision-making and implementation have been receiving significant attention in the academic literature on the EU since the introduction of the new institutionalist approaches in the 1980s (Vanhoonacker and Neuhold 2015; Ekelund 2014). Vanhoonacker and Neuhold (2015) argued that different scholars construe and explain the role of institutions in policy decision-making and implementation differently despite the unanimous agreement on the importance of institutions. Policy decision-making and implementation concepts depend on the actors in the various institutions who perform such roles. This section emphasises issues about the institutions, their functions, and the concepts (policy decision-making and implementation) that are of interest to this study. Also, these concepts are relevant and suitable in explaining MLG interactions and the policies and decisions Finland and the EU developed and implemented regularly and during the 2015-2016 migration crisis.

Contemporary decision-making practices are becoming complex and characterised by actors' development, implementation and monitoring of public policies at diverse levels (Daniell and Kay 2017). Similarly, Blank (2009) argued that an essential trait of the contemporary world is the awareness that numerous challenges demand that decision-making and policy implementation occur at different territorial levels and should be performed by diverse actors, a significant call on the adoption of MLG in reflecting multilevel issues, which this research supports. Thus, MLG interactions shape policy implementors in complex organisations and governmental interactions (Hanf and O'Toole, Jr. 2003), which the constructivism theory clarifies. MLG interactions cater for the diversity in decision-making processes and coordination among the different levels involved in these complex exchanges (Scholten 2012) in a social and political setting. Within MLG arrangements, reliance on other levels for policy implementation has become renowned and an ongoing process (Daniell and Kay 2017). Various factors influence the formal implementation of policies and decision-making processes within the realm of immigration governance. These factors encompass global migration policies and trends, the immigration policies adopted by third countries, national level state interests, bilateral agreements with third-party nations, and the involvement of non-state actors. (Maggetti and Trein 2019).

The MLG framework reveals that the decision-making machinery of the EU and the Member States is not controlled by one particular level but instead spread across and among the various levels (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006; Jeffery and Petterson 2020). This assertion suggests that actors of various levels, with diverse competencies in decision-making in distinct fields, benefit the MLG arrangements (Dolinar 2010). Dolinar (2010) explains that the purpose of including various actors from diverse spheres in decision-making in MLG interactions is to increase the acceptance and compliance with the decisions made. However, achieving compliance is not always attainable because the reluctance of some actors can make agreements difficult. For example, because asylum and refugee policies are politicised predominantly in the Member States of the EU, it affects the Member States' stances when deciding at the EU level. For instance, during the 2015-2016 migration crisis, many politicians in Finland regularly complained in the media about the slow pace of implementing EU decisions and the fact that not all Member States had complied with the directive (Wahlbeck 2019a), which influenced Finland approaches and stances during EU level negotiations. Decision-making within the EU is, therefore, a multi-layered approach that encompasses a variety of actors, different opinions and views, possible conflicts of interests and incoherency in attaining outcomes (Papadopoulos 2006; Torfing et al. 2012; Vanhoonacker and Neuhold 2015; Mancheva et al. 2023).

Furthermore, the EU exhibits a decentralised implementation structure, signifying its lack of autonomous systems for executing policies and decisions. Instead, it heavily relies on the Member States for implementation (Treib 2014). Within the scope of this study, various institutions play pivotal roles in enforcing immigration policies and decisions in Finland. Specifically, the Ministry of Interior oversees migration issues, with its Immigration Department contributing to policy formulation, political decision-making, and other related functions. Concurrently, the Finnish Immigration Service assumes the responsibility for executing and deciding on residence permits, as well as processing refugee and asylum applications (Finnish Border Guard Undated). The relevance of the implementation concept is paramount in this research's context, as it elucidates that, in the MLG of immigration, certain institutions are tasked with the implementation of policies and decisions. The 2015-2016 migration crisis in the EU serves as an illustrative example of policy implementation, emphasising that such occurrences are not isolated incidents but rather recurrent in the governance of immigration. These dynamics extend beyond immigration matters and permeate various facets of the daily operations of both the EU and its Member States.

Implementation of the policies and decisions formulated brings them to fulfilment. This assertion indicates that enacting policies and decisions are for them to be implemented

towards perceived goals. The policies and decisions in organisations account for parts of the governance machinery in governments and organisations. They can be taken at different levels of authority depending on the magnitude of the problem that needs solutions. Likewise, the policies and decisions can be executed through negotiations and interactions among actors within and across the various levels. For instance, the interagency cooperation between the Finnish Police, Customs and Border Guards officials helps improve the cost efficiency in carrying out their tasks (Finnish Border Guards Undated). This specific example highlights the inter-relational idea of the nature of governance within the MLG framework. Hence, MLG interactions involve formulating policies, making decisions, and implementing such procedures and decisions through deliberative interactions among diverse actors with different competencies and authorities at different levels of jurisdiction (Papadopoulos 2006). According to Papadopoulos (2006, p.2), the mechanisms integral to MLG encompass activities such as "deliberations, bargaining, and compromise seeking." These processes are marked by "cooperative" relationships among national governments and various actors operating at functional and territorial levels. Such cooperative connections align with the constructivist perspective, effectively elucidating the distinctive nature of MLG. Although the MLG paradigm and the social constructivism theory seem to explain the complexities in the interactions between actors and institutions on different levels, there are also various criticisms against them, which the following subsection discusses.

3.6 Criticisms of Social Constructivism and MLG

Theories and concepts, such as social constructivism and MLG, are not immune to criticism. This sub-section examines and discusses the various criticisms associated with these ideas. Berger perceives social constructivism as an illustrative instance of unanticipated consequences stemming from individual conceptualisations (Jovanović 2021). In line with this perspective, Servent (2011) contends that actors and structures are not static entities but rather engage in dynamic interactions. The ability of actors to alter the significance and operation of structures introduces heightened complexity into the decision-making process. Consequently, Servent (2011) argues that the quest for understanding rules and actors within the framework of social constructivism renders it less suitable for the formal modelling of decision-making. In this study, the goal is to use the social constructivism theory together with MLG to analyse and depict the dynamic and complex relationship between Finnish and EU actors. The use of constructivism is thus focused on mutuality and not on individuals' actions within the MLG interactions. The constructivist theory, therefore, helps analyse the changes in interactions and why preferences in decision-making happen in a broader context, yet specifically helps understand the norms of behaviours within the MLG context.

Although MLG is prevalent in European studies and beyond, the concept still suffers criticism regarding its precise meaning (Tortola 2017). Tortola (2017, p.234) argued that because MLG lacks "conceptual clarity", it lacks any distinct logic to develop descriptive, normative, and ultimately causal claims. This study employs MLG to depict Finland's engagement with the European Union in the context of immigration governance while concurrently utilising social constructivism as the theoretical framework to underpin the presented arguments to substantiate and clarify Tortola's (2017) argument. However, Daniell and Kay (2017) argue that there is a general unanimity that MLG interactions facilitate effective governance and coordination across multiple sectors, which is what this research seeks to establish. Empirical researchers using MLG as a heuristic tool have tended to dwell on and operationalise only sections of the whole phenomenon involved in the MLG relationship. There is, however, no agreement on the best practice in designing and operating MLG in sectors and on policy issues in different policy contexts, complicating the ambiguity that Tortola (2017) contended. Like many studies, this study does not capture all the levels.

Again, MLG can seem remarkable, but it is also regarded as lacking a theoretical mainstay (Aälberts 2004; Búzás 2006), which is why this study employs the social constructivism theory in offering a better understanding of immigration governance. According to Cobern (1993, p.109), the "philosophical basis for constructivism is epistemological fallibalism", which implies that "all knowledge is fallible by virtue of lacking exactitude and comprehensiveness". In this context, "fallible" indicates that knowledge is inherently subject to uncertainty and potential error. The rationale for this fallibilism is attributed to the lack of exactitude and comprehensiveness in knowledge within the constructivist perspective. Essentially, constructivism acknowledges the provisional and imperfect nature of knowledge due to its inherent limitations in precision and inclusiveness. Tortola (2017) supports this claim that MLG is thus theoretically underdeveloped, particularly its ambitious goal from its inception as an alternative to intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism. Also, Scholten (2012) argued that critics of MLG contend that it did not develop into a full-fledged theoretical framework. Instead, it only explains policymaking taking place at numerous levels. Aälberts (2004), however, asserted that MLG indeed presents an overall stimulating image of how authority is spread at and across the diverse levels of governance, but it fails to scrutinise the concept of the state itself. This argument implies that MLG, as a concept, does not necessarily explain the state's role in governance. However, this research emphasises the role of the state's institutions in immigration governance in Finland alongside that of the supranational (EU) to obtain a more pragmatic depiction of MLG and its complex problem-solving nature.

The provisions of MLG, that is, the various institutions, processes and structures that facilitate decision-making and policy implementation at and across the levels of governance, can or cannot successfully remedy all policy problems. They can also create new issues for policymakers and the other actors involved at diverse levels (Maggetti and Trein 2019). MLG arrangements can generate some of these difficulties because of the interactions among the actors and institutions. Maggetti and Trein (2019, p.358) listed some of these difficulties as "increased complexity, opacity, informality, selectivity and unresponsiveness in MLG settings". For instance, Dolinar (2010) contends that actors' participation within the MLG framework can be obstructed because different actors have different amounts of power and resources. Within an ideal MLG, however, where lines of authority are less hierarchical (Nugent 2017), all actors should have an equal say in the interaction (Mancheva et al. 2023). Dolinar's (2010) claim implies that suspicion and conflicts can escalate into complexities. This assertion emphasises what Bucken-Knapp et al. (2018) noted that several studies have shown that the complexity of MLG might result in ineffective coordination at the various levels of interaction among the actors. For example, OECD's (2018, p.27) research demonstrated that 80 per cent of respondents to their questionnaire stated a "lack of coordination" between diverse levels of governments in administering migrant integration. Maggetti and Trein (2019) also argued that in cases where MLG interactions cannot find solutions to policy problems but instead generate additional issues, rigidities and volatilities flood such arrangements in the MLG relationship.

Finally, MLG interactions influence the fiscal strength of the EU and, as such, raise doubts among advocates for more centralised decision-making and policymaking within the EU frameworks (Dolinar 2010). Similarly, MLG could undermine democratic representation (Daniell and Kay 2017) and accountability (Mancheva et al. 2023). These issues result in power-grabbing among new stakeholders and depletion in the fairness of policies. Consequently, actors at the diverse levels of MLG might prefer different policy measures and may have different perspectives that affect effective coordination (Scholten 2012). Even though there are criticisms of MLG, this research argues that its significance in simplifying the complex and dynamic nature of immigration governance and ensuring a clear understanding of Finland and EU relations in immigration governance outweighs its limitations. Daniell and Kay (2017) agree that there is a general unanimity that MLG interactions facilitate effective governance and coordination across multiple sectors, which is what this research seeks to establish. Nevertheless, Omodan and Tsotetsi (2020) contend that the collective engagement of actors in a substantive interaction, wherein they collaboratively deliberate and decide, fosters an enriched process of sense-making pertaining

to reality. In light of this perspective, the present study employs MLG as a heuristic instrument to elucidate the dynamics of immigration governance in Finland. Concurrently, social constructivism serves as the overarching theoretical framework to underpin and contextualise this conceptual approach, particularly in relation to Finland's interactions with the EU. Supporting this argument, Jeffery and Peterson (2020, p.762) contended that MLG "can potentially be one of the most important contributions so far in this century to [portraying] how we govern ourselves within and beyond the State".

The upcoming sections in this chapter elaborate on the methods and methodology used to achieve the research goal and objectives. They provide insight into the overall research process, detailing how it was conducted and the selection of suitable methodological approaches that align with MLG.

3.7 Qualitative Research Methods and the Case Study Approach

Research methods are divided into quantitative and qualitative, with the usual practice of identifying whether a quantitative or qualitative method is suitable to answer the research questions. The differences lie in the approaches used and the objective or subjective nature of the intended and acquired results. However, qualitative research has gradually gained dominance in the management and social sciences as one of the most used methods in the past decades (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). Typically, qualitative research methods entail the use of appropriate techniques to appreciate the meanings, problems, viewpoints, and aims of the institutions, organisations or individuals recruited for the execution of the study (Mack et al. 2005; Bricki and Green 2007; Srivastava and Thomson 2009; Setia 2017). It involves inductive reasoning contrary to a quantitative method, which is a deductive approach. (Kumar 2011).

Qualitative research investigates, analyses, and understands a variety of social and public policy occurrences, complex behaviours, organisations, and systems (Ritchie and Spencer 1994). It focuses on explaining verbal expressions or thematic constructs rather than numerical representations, which are typical of quantitative approaches, with the aim of thoroughly clarifying and understanding a social phenomenon (Bricki and Green, 2007). The social phenomenon explored in this study is immigration governance. Again, the qualitative method answers questions regarding the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of a phenomenon being studied rather than 'how much' and 'how many', which are primarily quantitative. Therefore, it provides an understanding and interpretation of complex phenomena about how people experience these occurrences (Mack et al. 2005). Ontologically, qualitative research

helps the researcher to understand the nature of reality directly from the person experiencing the phenomenon. This explanation supports the choice of the qualitative approach to examine the governance of immigration through conducting interviews and analysing documents.

Willis (2007) contended that qualitative research is meaningless without understanding the broader methodologies and theories in which it is grounded. Thus, theoretical perspectives, assumptions and reality justify the choice of a particular method and methodology (Crotty 1998). This research supports this assertion that the theories and methods help a researcher better understand the phenomenon being studied and put the study into context and structure for the readers to follow. Therefore, this qualitative research is grounded in social constructivism theory and MLG framework, as analysed above. The MLG conceptual framework, social constructivism theory, and the comprehensive literature review undertaken in the preceding chapter collectively serve as foundational pillars underpinning the reliability of the data gathered from empirical studies and documentary sources. These theoretical frameworks not only shape the researcher's perspective through the lens of MLG, but they also guide the interpretation of data by acknowledging the impact of social constructs on interviewees' viewpoints. The literature review, covering existing academic works pertinent to the research theme, played a pivotal role in identifying deficiencies in the extant knowledge base.

These frameworks and the insights collected from the literature review constitute the bedrock supporting the accuracy and reliability of the collected data. Furthermore, they inform the formulation of the open-ended questions utilised during the interviews, designed to produce nuanced and qualitative responses. The integration of these frameworks in the research process is integral to ensuring methodological rigour and contributing substantive insights. The careful alignment of the research design with the MLG conceptual framework and social constructivism theory, coupled with the discerning scrutiny of extant literature, facilitates a purposeful exploration of identified gaps in the academic landscape. Through this systematic approach, the research aims to augment the existing body of knowledge by offering valuable contributions to areas where informational gaps persist within the academic literature. The right choice of relevant theories influenced the decision to select a qualitative research approach as appropriate for this research (Flick 2006). MLG concept was chosen to depict the interactions between the diverse actors and to understand in depth the nature and dynamics of this complex relationship. Doing so requires expert opinions of the actors and documentary evidence for triangulation (Bowen 2009). Knowing and

understanding the theories and their implication for research facilitates choosing the proper approach. The qualitative approach, thus, accommodates a case study in this research.

The case study is one of the most often used qualitative research approaches (Willis 2007) in the social sciences. The approach facilitates detailed inquiries into individuals, groups, institutions, actors, and public policies. These inquiries cover a short or extended period in which the event or phenomena being studied occurred. They can also generate quantitative and qualitative data (Burnham et al. 2004). However, Burnham et al. (2004) assert that most case studies have a qualitative feel compared to quantitative ones because they generate more specific data on a case or phenomenon. This specificity allows the researcher to establish an association to convincingly relate the empirical findings to existing literature and theories to develop causalities and associations. They also enable the researcher to give concrete explanations and interpretations specific to the studied case. These arguments support the choice of the case study of the 2015-2016 migration crisis, which is analysed in detail in Chapter 6, to enhance an understanding of Finland's crisis management of immigration.

Specifically, this study is an interpretive case study, which differs from a descriptive one. In this thesis, the case study uses empirical data to develop themes to explain, support, and challenge the MLG paradigm and social constructivism theory. The rationale for employing an interpretive case study lies in its utilisation of descriptive data to construct conceptual categories, thereby advancing the discourse to challenge and substantiate established theoretical frameworks in the interpretation of the gathered data (Willis 2007). This case study, however, focuses on Finland's immigration governance, especially the dynamism and complexity of its relationship with the EU and vice-versa. It thus facilitates an understanding of Finland's immigration policies, the institutions managing immigration, the perceptions of the authorities in charge of the institutions, local levels, and the actors involved in this complex interaction. It also enhances a better understanding of the regular and crisis governance of immigration (the deportation process) on a multilevel.

3.8   Elite Interviewing and Document Collection

Elites are groups or individuals who hold or have held prominent positions in societies. These people can significantly influence political decisions, policy outcomes, and implementation more than any other public member. However, the definition of the term 'elite' is not as simple as illustrated above. Harvey (2010) claims that the term's meaning often confronts scholars to the point that they tend to argue against its usefulness. These arguments make the term's definition more challenging when compared across diverse

sectors, nations, and organisations. However, elites in this study refer to all the interviewees engaged during the research interview at their various institutions.

Elite interviewing concerns the researcher's understanding of the theoretical positions underpinning the interviewee's values and perspectives. It suggests that the information required from these elites is most often unavailable in textbooks, documents, and public records (Richards 1996). In this research, top and middle-level managers of the following institutions in Finland were interviewed. The national level institutions are the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Helsinki Police Department, the Finnish Police National Board, the Finnish Parliament and the Border Guards Department. The institutions were selected using the purposive sampling technique because they each contribute to the governance of immigration in Finland at diverse levels with different expertise (Bricki and Green 2007). Expert Sampling thus calls "for experts in a particular field to be the subjects of the purposive sampling" (Etikan et al. 2016, p.3). Setia (2017) also argued that a qualitative study researcher uses the purposive sampling technique to answer specific research questions.

At the local level of decision-making and implementation of immigration policies, the Department of Economic Development (namely Employment and Immigration Services, the City Executive Office) of the City of Helsinki and the Finnish Red Cross Society were interviewed. The city of Helsinki was chosen because it has one of the highest immigrant populations in Finland, and Helsinki accommodates almost all the national level institutions sampled for this study. The Finnish Red Cross Society was chosen because of its active role in the reception of asylum-seekers and refugees in Finland's reception centres. The actors from the EU level are from the European Commission (Directorate in charge of General Migration and Home Affairs), the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, and the Finnish Permanent Representation in Brussels. The interviews with these actors in their institutions also helped answer the main research questions and justify the choice of MLG as the appropriate tool for understanding the decision-making and perceptions of immigration governance by the relevant authorities in Finland.

Nevertheless, society regards elites highly because of their power and influence in decision-making in the public domain. Interviewing elites comes with some benefits due to their importance and value. Elites can help the researcher to understand the context of an inquiry clearly. Thus, they provide pertinent information that is not in the public domain and not recorded for public consumption (Richards 1996) to researchers. Such data can provide unique inputs into the outcome of the research. People tend to believe information coming

from such elites because of its weight, which increases the reliability and rigour of the study. Hence, the benefit of interviewing such elite groups in this research is that their information helps to understand how immigration is governed at various decision-making levels. This peculiar information helped analyse the events that unfolded in Finland during the 2015-2016 migration crisis in Europe. It also helped evaluate how Finland acted or reacted and how the EU's laws and policies influenced Finland's decisions and vice-versa.

However, because they know their importance in society, elites can prove challenging to access for interviews. This factor and many others can become the limitations of elite interviewing. Researchers, therefore, need to be aware of them and prepare suitable solutions beforehand. These limitations can, for instance, influence how the validity and reliability of the research are demonstrated (Berry 2002). For example, some elites can refuse to grant interview requests because of their awareness and suspicions of losing their reputation, thus damaging the image of others or their institutions by divulging such information. They may also, in such circumstances, honour the interview but provide dodgy information and conceal relevant ones. Researchers can develop strategies to encourage elites to grant interviews and cooperate if researchers are aware. For example, the researcher can inform elites on how they will protect the data. Also, if elites provide dodgy information, the researcher's preparations before the interview can allow them to triangulate the data. This triangulation can be done by consulting data sources like memos, company information, and archived documents. The researcher can then ask these questions by stating the known facts during the interview. These issues were circumvented by seeking clarifications from the interviewees, statements that were unclearer during the interview. In one instance, the interviewee made several changes after receiving the transcript of the interviewee; but this case happened after the interview. Those changes instigated further questions, which were asked as comments in the transcript, and the interviewee responded accordingly. In most cases, the interviewees were satisfied with the transcript.

Another problem with elite interviewing is that the interviewee may interpret the same information differently on separate occasions. They may have either forgotten what they said or changed their opinion about it, an example of which is cited above. Similarly, they may also decide to change their minds during the interview. This challenge presents difficulty in validating the research findings and hinders generalizability (Richards 1996). This problem can also ensue when the interviewer forces the discussion in a specific direction. It can also happen if a different individual conducts the same interview differently and with a different approach. A well-prepared researcher can probe further by sensibly and cautiously questioning the submissions of these elites and pushing them to respond appropriately. Such

instances occurred during the interviewing process, and the interviewees were willing to respond to further questions and provide necessary clarifications.

Again, because elites usually occupy senior or higher positions than the rest of the workers in the organisation or institutions, they are more inclined to express the company's views (Harvey 2010). Thus, elites' views and opinions during interviews may not necessarily be their viewpoints on the matter at hand but rather the organisation's. This perspective may present data gaps and inconsistencies, especially when the researcher is interested in the interviewee's opinion and not their organisation's philosophy. The researcher can send the transcribed or analysed data back to the interviewee to provide feedback to overcome this shortfall. This approach helps the researcher to check for consistency in their responses. Alternatively, the interviewer can request that the interview occur in a location where the interviewee is more comfortable giving his opinion about the issue. In this study, a respondent was unwilling to provide his perception about a particular topic because he was representing his institution. Although efforts were made to convince him of the importance of his opinion on the issue being discussed, it made no changes. Instead, he gave an opinion reflecting that of the institution. However, this did not affect the data collected in any way.

Meanwhile, documentary sources became the primary data sources that serve this research's purpose, while the interviews (due to their limited number) were used as supporting data to triangulate the data found. These sources of data included archived documents, anonymised documents (official government reports, white papers, consultations), parliamentary records (draft resolutions and bills, reports and plans, circulars), previous discussions on the immigration matters on YLE (the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation) as well as memos. These data were obtained mainly from the institutions' databases. Moreover, visits to the Finnish Parliament Library, the Helsinki Central Library (Oodi) and the University of Helsinki Library in search of hard copies of these documents proved futile. The required data were mainly on the databases accessed and e-documents, as seen from the compilation in Appendix A. Similarly, no hard copy of data was obtained from a visit to the Library of the European Commission in Brussels. Therefore, these documents obtained from the databases were analysed and substantiated with the interviews conducted to answer the research questions and justify the theoretical paradigm chosen as a tool to explain the phenomenon under study.

3.8.1   Gaining Access to Elites for Interviews.

In gaining access to these institutions for this study, formal contacts were made with them mainly through emails. It is crucial to note that accessing most institutions took time, effort,

and preparation. This approach was possible since technological advancements have altered how researchers approach institutions for data collection (Harvey 2010). In contacting the institutions for this study, emails were dispatched to request access to the institutions. Some required research permits, which were applied for before gaining access to those institutions were possible. Contacting them for access entailed a personal introduction, the research's nature and purpose, and a data management plan (Harvey 2010).

Nevertheless, many social and physical factors like race, ethnicity, position, age, class, gender, personality, networks and the research's purpose can affect securing access (Harvey 2010). Harvey (2010) suggests that researchers pursue multiple avenues as much as possible in a courteous but determined manner to gain access. For instance, gaining access to many initially planned institutions was tricky in this research. For example, only two of the two hundred Members of the Finnish Parliament agreed to be interviewed, although all of them were contacted. Some negatively responded, while others did not even respond at all. Suspected factors for this low response could include race, ethnicity and position as a mere PhD researcher whose output or input may not be valuable to them. Others used the Covid-19 situation as an excuse, and many others claimed to be too busy to honour any interview. However, a critical factor in gaining access was persistence and consistency, which yielded the benefit of gaining access to the two MPs.

Nevertheless, Finland has an open policy of access to information and non-refusal. According to the Act on Openness of Government Activities chapter 3, section 9, subsection 1, everyone has the right to access official documents in the public domain (The Finnish Ministry of Justice 2020). However, there are exceptions to this law depending on the intended usage of the requested information. Also, some data are top-level secrets, which are sensitive to divulge and may be impossible to access. Although the law makes provisions for public access to information, decisions on granting access remain the preserve of the authorities in charge of the institutions unless stated otherwise. Thus, the authorities can give access if they are satisfied with the purpose for which the data is being requested and the data management plan. However, the institutions are obliged to vividly state the reason(s) for the refusal of the request. This Freedom of Information Act worked in many instances where there was not much difficulty gaining access, and further recommendations were provided for easy access.

The interviews were initially planned to take place in Finland and Brussels at a confirmed date, time, and venue. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most interviews happened via Skype, Teams, over the phone and Zoom. As stated earlier, only two interviews occurred

face-to-face in Brussels and Helsinki. The interviews with these EU and Finnish institutions happened online except for face-to-face interviews with two institutions: one with the Finnish Permanent Representation in Brussels and another with the Ministry of Interior in Helsinki.

3.8.2   Interview Guide and Interviewing

The interviews were conducted using predesigned semi-structured interview guides. A semi-structured interview "strikes a balance between a structured and unstructured interview" (Srivastava and Thomson 2009, p.75). The semi-structured interview guides give the researcher clues on what to ask the interviewee and probe further for details based on their responses. Elites often prefer to express their opinions or perspectives about the issues under discussion (Harvey 2011). They want to freely communicate their views without following a standardised questionnaire with a limited choice of answers. Therefore, a structured questionnaire was not advocated in this research because it would limit the researcher and the interviewee who wanted to say more about the question(s) asked. It also helped the researcher to ask probing questions and delve deeper to know more, following the interviewees' viewpoints (Mack et al. 2005).

Berry (2002, p. 682) argued that "for projects where the depth, context, or the historical record is at the heart of data collection, elite interviewing using broad, open-ended questioning might be the best choice". This argument also supports using the semi-structured interview guide in this research's interviews. Semi-structured interview guides were also compatible with the chosen approach for data analysis (Gale et al. 2013). Although this gives the researcher and the interviewee flexibility, it can be time-consuming. It could lead to deviation from the topic under discussion into areas not necessarily part of the research. Therefore, researchers need to be aware of these issues and know how to bring interviewees back in line with the topic of discussion. This process should be cautiously done to avoid seeming interfering or impolite. However, this issue was not encountered during the interviewing process, making the process a lot smoother than anticipated.

Moreover, alongside audio recordings, notes were documented during the interviews. While audio and video recording was initially the preferred method, a majority of individuals can harbour reservations about speaking openly about sensitive information while being video-recorded. Concerns centred around the potential release of sensitive data into the public domain, which could adversely impact both their image and the reputation of the institution. Video recording was thus intentionally omitted to create a more comfortable environment for interviewees to articulate their thoughts freely.

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3.8.3 Documents Collection Process

Various approaches and methods are essential in qualitative studies (Flicker 2006). According to Bowen (2009, p.28), qualitative researchers are expected to use multiple sources of data (at least two) for authentication purposes. This research used documents gathered from the databases of various institutions, which was supported by the elite interviews described above for triangulation purposes. This section discusses how the document data was collected. Document analysis involves reviewing and evaluating documents from various sources containing words and texts recorded without the researcher's interference (Bowen 2009). They limit the potential bias of interviewing, which is the main reason for supporting the document analysis with interviewing in this study. According to Mancheva et al. (2023, p.9), "policy documents provide a legal framework determining the institutional design opportunities for decision-making". Focusing on the EU and Member States' policy documents allows for the inclusion of top-down (EU) and bottom-up (Member States) dimensions of implementation (Mancheva et al. 2023, p.9) and decision-making interactions.

Specific keywords, themes, and terminologies were entered to retrieve the necessary primary documents from the databases. In some cases, the BOOLEAN searches were conducted where "AND", "OR", and "AND NOT" features were used to limit the data required to specific terms. The retrieved data were tabulated in Microsoft Word, but the PDF versions were stored in Mendeley, RefWorks and the University's OneDrive for easy access and referencing. The data collected were analysed using the data analysis method described below, which is similar to how interview transcripts are explored and interpreted in the following chapters.

3.9   Data Analysis and Interpretation

"Analysing interview data is a multi-step sense-making endeavour" (DeCuir-Guabyetal et al. 2011, p.137). Hence, the process by which the data is analysed and presented is crucial (Harvey 2010). The process is necessary to answer questions regarding the choice of the theoretical framework, associated concepts, and their relevance. Parkinson et al. (2016, p.28) support this in their argument that 'theoretical positions typically underpin qualitative approaches to data analysis'. Also, those positions help answer the research questions, and the findings are used to conclude.

In this study, the analysis proceeded concurrently with the data collection, using 'FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS'. Srivastava and Thomson (2009, p.77) argued that:

> If the research aims to generate recommendations or outcomes within a limited period [regarding] a given policy or policy issues, with specific apriori issues, which may be in the form of subsidiary research questions, and there is a predetermined sample population, in that case, framework analysis may be the appropriate methodology.

This argument supports the choice of framework analysis as the methodological tool for this research to make the outcomes valid, reliable, and meaningful. Unlike in quantitative research, where data collection and analysis are mutually exclusive and follow a rigorous chronological order, framework analysis in qualitative research enables this to be done simultaneously (Gale et al. 2013). This concurrency is the flexibility the framework analysis provides, and it can handle thick data simultaneously. The data analysis commenced while fieldwork was still ongoing to save time. This approach was used because the institutions scheduled different times for the interviews. Hence, it was judicious to begin the analysis while waiting for the other interviews. The framework's approach also supports document analysis, thus, its appropriateness for analysing the data in this study.

The Framework approach involves a logical procedure of "sifting, charting and sorting materials according to key themes and issues" (Ritchie and Spencer 1994, p.177). This qualitative approach is suitable for applied policy research analysis, such as decision-making and policy implementation of immigration governance. Again, it is an analytical tool used to examine policies and processes (Srivastava and Thomson 2009) and how "emergent data-driven themes should guide the development of the analytical framework" (Parkinson et al. 2016, p.7). The framework analysis is adaptable to research with "defined research questions, a limited time frame, a predesigned sample, and a priori issues" (Srivastava and Thomson 2009, p.73), unlike grounded theory, which seeks mainly to produce a theory. This research has the listed characteristics of using framework analysis; hence, the framework analysis was chosen to analyse the data collected. Framework analysis can also produce a theory, but the focus in this research was not on creating a theory; instead, it was to comprehend and interpret a phenomenon that occurred at a place using a particular theory.

Framework analysis also produces high-quality summarised data following clear steps to identify commonalities and differences in qualitative data (Gale et al. 2013). The process involves five phases: familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting and mapping, and interpretation. Hence, it helps to identify underlying motivations, trends, themes, perspectives, justifications, and clarifications obtained from the interviews to thoroughly interpret and explain the data (Lacey and Luff 2007). Empirical data collected from qualitative sources are usually unstructured, consisting of verbal expressions, direct

quotations, and discussions (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994); therefore, there is a need to become first of all familiar with the data before any other stage of the process.

Familiarisation involves reading and rereading the data to become acquainted with it. It also consists of transcribing verbatim the data collected through focus group discussions, handwritten notes, and audio and video recordings. While familiarising with the data, the researcher or those involved in collecting it can remember some non-verbal communications and note them down. It is also an opportunity for those engaging with the data for the first time to know more about it. When it is a group research, all members come together to discuss the preliminary findings from the field. During the familiarisation, the researcher in this study transcribed the audio recordings mainly as there were no videos. The handwritten notes helped to clarify some aspects that seemed inaudible. According to Lacey and Luff (2007), transcribing is a standard procedure in any qualitative data analysis. I read the transcripts and sent them out to all respective respondents to examine and agree that they were precisely the discussions that transpired during the interviews.

After familiarisation came the organisation of the data into thematic frameworks, which helped to categorise the transcribed data. This organisation can be repeated until all the data have meaningful themes. This study developed twenty distinct thematic categories, represented by descriptors such as "anticipating the crisis" and "perception of the actors." I systematically extrapolated these themes from the gathered and transcribed data. Although the construction of these themes tolerated some theoretical underpinning deep-seated in my constructivist viewpoint, characterised mainly by a priori and reflexivity, the primary methodological orientation remained inductive. I induced patterns in the data without relying on pre-existing theories or pre-defined themes. This method involved broadly categorising the data according to related themes. The a priori and reflexivity acknowledged signifies a nuanced interplay between inductive and deductive elements. It also highlighted an awareness of the subjective influence on the interpretative process. The development of themes ceased upon reaching a thematic saturation, denoting a point at which exhaustive exploration yielded no additional meaningful themes. This practice aligns with the qualitative research approach, which emphasises a thorough examination of the data. In sum, the explained account reveals a practically sound approach that seamlessly integrates inductive reasoning, theoretical considerations, and a constructivist perspective, resulting in a detailed thematic analysis.

After indexing, the data was charted to map the thematic areas efficiently against the indices. Charting makes the data look presentable, comparable, and more organised for

interpretation. This charting was done using different Word documents to collate the codes from all the interviews. For instance, code one from all the transcribed and coded themes went to a new word file named "CODE 1". This process ensured that all the codes were in one file, presentable and used to support the interpretations and discussions.

Mapping and interpretation are the final stages of the procedures in Framework analysis. Since every research project has time and resource limitations, an analysis should stop after answering the research questions (Lacey and Luff 2007). The data in the chart, mapped against each other, enables the researcher to draw similarities and contrast themes to facilitate interpretations. At this stage, the data becomes more meaningful because it is the portion of the analysed data written mainly in the report or thesis write-up, apart from some direct quotations, which may come from the raw data. The researcher blends the interpreted data with the literature review and the theoretical framework to conclude during the interpretation. This study aims not to develop a theory, as would have been the case in grounded theory. Therefore, data interpretation and conclusions sufficed.

3.9.1   Validity, Reliability and Generalizability of Research Materials

In classifying any qualitative research as rigorous, its validity, reliability, and generalizability are crucial and indispensable issues (Lacey and Luff 2007). Qualitative research usually focuses on understanding a topic in detail and not on generalisability per se (Setia 2017, Slevitch 2011). These three features are discussed chronologically below.

Firstly, the objects or participants studied in qualitative research are used to verify the study's validity, unlike quantitative research, which employs the academic benchmarks already developed in their abstract forms (Berry 2002; Flick 2006). Flick (2006) argued that the criteria used principally for deciding validity in qualitative research depend much on the empirical outcomes. Thus, it depicts how the analyses objectively and truthfully represent the collected data (Lacey and Luff 2007). Also, validity is demonstrated based on the reflexivity of events unfolding, the choice of appropriate methodology, theories, and the significance of the findings (Slevitch 2011). This research proved validity by developing codes (seen in Appendix F) from the interview data used in the analyses and interpretation. Again, the generated data was interpreted so that the researcher's opinion about the issue did not influence it to a large extent to ascertain validity. Thus, Flick (2006) argued that in qualitative research, the researcher's thoughts, observations, and overall feelings on the field could form part of the research data, which are often documented. They can also be used as part of the interpretation of the data collected (Flick 2006). An effort was made to remain as objective as possible, although subjectivity influenced the interpretation outcomes at specific

points. To justify this claim, Lacey and Luff (2007) argue that qualitative research's interpretative and subjective nature makes it impossible for the researcher to be entirely separated from the study, which occasionally occurred in this research and does not invalidate the study.

Reliability measures the consistency of a research outcome such that replication by another researcher is possible given the same circumstances (Berry 2002). Thus, the method employed should be reproducible. The reliability of this study would be ascertained if the proposed methods used to achieve the outcomes in this research can obtain the same or similar results in another study, making it reproducible. Hence, this claim is attainable when the institutions, actors, theories, and approaches are the same. However, a suspected change that may alter the result will be if a different researcher interviews different institutional actors who might have different opinions about the research's goal and objectives. Also, the data interpretation by other researchers might be different, thereby invalidating the reliability.

This research did not aim to generalise its findings because the case country, the institutions and the actors engaged are insufficient to enable generalizability, although sample size is considered irrelevant in qualitative methodology. Instead, it aims to achieve transferability, which is "the extent to which readers can use/transfer the described experiences of the phenomenon to their settings based on the depth and vividness of description" (Slevitch 2011, p.78).

3.10   Summary

This chapter has outlined and justified the theoretical framework and methodology employed to derive requisite analytical data, which were subsequently utilised in the ensuing chapters for data interpretation. The conceptualisation put forth by MLG advocates for collaborative efforts among actors across various levels to uphold effective immigration governance. This statement implies that the collaborative task and its coordination in this research were systematically investigated through elite interviewing using a carefully designed semi-structured interview guide coupled with a thorough analysis of relevant documents. The chapter also underscored the relevance of the social constructivism theory in explaining the construction of ideas and perceptions of diverse actors within the MLG relationship. For instance, actors possess cognitive and social characteristics that influence their actions and behaviours, eventually shaping their observable properties or outcomes within that context. These properties include their ability to interpret information, make sense of their

surroundings, engage in social relations, and ultimately manifest certain observable behaviours or outcomes (Geels 2020). The chapter further presented the rigorous analytical process involved in analysing, interpreting, and presenting the data. The next chapter will use the analysed data obtained from fieldwork and document examination to discuss and analyse the findings of the first research question. It will also involve integrating insights from the literature review and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 4 THE INTERACTIVE NATURE OF INSTITUTIONS AND ACTORS IN IMMIGRATION GOVERNANCE

4.0   Introduction

The previous chapter provided an in-depth discussion and clarification of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the research, as well as the methods and methodology employed in conducting this study. This current chapter specifically addresses research question one: RQ.1) How does the constructivist perspective influence the understanding of the factors that shape and differentiate the nature and patterns of interaction between actors governing immigration in Finland and their multilevel relationship with the European Union? The use of both empirical data and literature sources, along with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks in this chapter and subsequent ones, suggests a comprehensive approach to exploring and explaining the nature and patterns of these MLG interactions. The chapter commences with a broad overview of MLG in practice at the EU, national, and local levels, which are followed by regular policy decision-making and implementation at the EU and national levels. A crucial argument in this study is that various actors and institutions at the supranational (EU), national, and local levels (Nugent 2017) interconnect to manage immigration in Finland and the EU.

The comparison between interactions at different levels (within Finland and between Finland and the EU) adds details, specificity and a layer of complexity to the analysis. These processes involve negotiating and implementing agreements, decisions, and policies. In this study, understanding the complexities and dynamism of decision-making and implementation in immigration governance requires considering the nature of the roles, ideas, norms and the levels of interaction of actors involved from a constructivist stance. Constructivists argue that individuals' thoughts and behaviours reflect their beliefs, and these beliefs are developed within a social context (Bevir 2009). In essence, people's cognitive processes and actions are linked with their underlying assumptions, which are influenced by the broader social environment. Time also affects the relationship between institutions and the socialisation of individuals (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001). The more time individuals spend participating in a specific institutional framework, the greater the likelihood that socialisation will occur. That is, the duration of agents' involvement in an institution plays a significant role in shaping their adoption of its values, norms, and behaviours. In practical terms, this suggests that as individuals spend more time within a particular organisation, community, or social structure, they become increasingly influenced by the culture and expectations of that environment, MLG of immigration in this study. This

perspective emphasises the importance of considering the social, political and cultural elements that contribute to the formation of beliefs and the way people perceive and engage with the world as they interact (Kanselaar 2002). That is, although the socialisation of actors in the EU policy process is the most apparent constructivist claim, many constructivist scholars have emphasised "the role of ideas, identity and discourse in EU governance" (Pollack 2020, p.24).

The main aim of management at any level is to deliver on promises, policies, and citizens' expectations. This purpose suggests that governing on a multilevel basis facilitates the coherence of a diversified system to benefit all citizens but not to foster competition among interacting actors at diverse levels. Hence, governance of immigration on a multilevel can be regarded as improved but challenging and complex interactions between policymakers, essential stakeholders, implementing or operational managers, competent decision-makers and other relevant actors (Torfing et al. 2012; Scholten 2012). For instance, according to EMN (2017, p.11-12):

> The Finnish Ministry of Interior established a working group to review the efficiency of the asylum process (from 10 February-31 December 2016) with representatives from [different ministries]. Also, with the help of the Finnish diplomatic missions, the Ministry of the Interior's Migration Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reviewed the asylum-seeker situation in the other EU Member States, especially in the Nordic countries and legislative measures.

Thus, multiple institutions with diverse roles must interact and cooperate to achieve a common goal of governing the immigration problems that they confront (Heino and Jauhiainen 2020). Social Constructivism advocates for a deeper understanding of how individuals, through their actions, actively shape the beginning, continuation, and modification of social life, institutions, and public policies (Bevir 2009). This theoretical framework contends that objective self-interest or institutional mandates do not solely dictate beliefs. Instead, it emphasises the dynamic agency of individuals in influencing and constructing social reality, highlighting interactive processes that extend beyond predetermined interests or institutional influences. Social Constructivism thus encourages a nuanced examination of how social realities are actively shaped by individuals through their beliefs and actions, with an emphasis on understanding these processes beyond the confines of objective self-interest or institutional determinism. It recognises the dynamic and interactive nature of social construction, emphasising the role of individuals as active agents in the ongoing development and modification of social life (Maslow and Nakamura 2008). Unanimous decisions and agreements in this complex interactive relationship and resolving

migration problems enable the actualisation of the policy decisions made and implemented within the MLG relationship. The outcome allows for a detailed evaluation and interpretation of the linkages involved in the nature and levels of these interactions. In line with this argument, Scholten (2012) questions why and how policies and decisions are being decided on a multilevel and how these affect interactions between the actors. However, Marsh and Stoker (2010, p.2) contend that:

> Outcomes in governance are not determined in the last analysis by cohesive and unified state or formal institutional arrangements, but individual and collective actors both in and beyond the state operating through complex and varied networks are the driving forces.

Therefore, consistency in the approach throughout all the levels is essential to achieve equal standards and better milestones (OECD 2018). As Bevir (2009) postulates, it is erroneous to assume that people in a given social and political interaction will act uniformly. In other words, the outcomes in governance are influenced by the actions and interactions of various individuals and groups, and these influences extend beyond the formal structures of government or institutions. The idea is that governance, especially MLG, is a complex process involving dynamic relationships and networks, and it's not solely dependent on formal organisational structures. According to Scholten (2012), MLG interactions are different from other modes of governance because some form of coordinated interaction occurs between different levels in particular policy fields. That is, it involves a technocratic style of collaboration between governments at diverse levels seeking a common approach to specifically identified issues. For instance, since 1999, the EU has fought to create a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), improve the legislative framework and harmonise asylum legislation of the Member States (Wahlbeck 2019, p. 304). All these actions and efforts by the EU involve the Member States (both national and local actors). However, Scholten (2012) contends that different perspectives exist on how these institutions interact in making and implementing policy decisions. For instance, constructivists postulate institutional unity as emergent property based on individual actions in the context of intersubjective norms, ideas and beliefs (Bevir 2009; Klinke 2017).

4.1 The Practicality of MLG of Migration

By 2001, the ratification of the Schengen Agreement in 1985 led to the removal of internal border checks among 13 of the original EU15 countries (excluding Ireland and the United Kingdom). Fundamental human rights declaration within the 'Area of Freedom, Security

and Justice (AFSJ),' embedded in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, further accelerated the integration process, incorporating the Schengen Area into the EU's legal framework governing free movement. Subsequently, it facilitated intra-EU mobility through the elimination of borders between Member States, formalised within the Maastricht Treaty (Van Mol and De Valk 2016). This development emphasised the critical importance of managing external EU borders, as individuals arriving in any of the current 26 Schengen countries gain physical, if not legal, access to all others (Mountz and Kempi 2014). The Schengen agreement facilitates the unrestricted movement of individuals holding Schengen Visas and residence permits within the Schengen Area. However, Schengen Visa holders and TCN immigrants are unable to travel to Ireland with their existing Visas or residence permits, necessitating separate applications for travel to Ireland. EU citizens and their family members can freely move between Member States for work, residence, and access to social services, akin to the citizens of the host country, without major institutional impediments (Fontaine 2010; Van Mol and De Valk 2016).

These provisions, enshrined in Article 20, paragraph 2a and Article 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), come with responsibilities outlined in Article 6(1) of the Citizens Directive. While citizens and their families can stay in another Member State for three months without registration, permanent residence requires registration with the relevant authorities (Grütters et al. 2018). Advocates argue that such intra-EU movements contribute to the economic competitiveness of the EU, with positive impacts outweighing the negatives. However, it is essential to highlight that the unrestricted flow of goods, services, and capital within the EU is highly favoured in comparison to the free movement of individuals (Geddes and Scholten, 2016). The intricacies and dynamism of this system underscore the necessity for collaborative efforts among various institutions to address associated challenges effectively. While the EU promotes the free movement of its Member States (Benton & Petrovic 2013), it rigorously regulates its external borders. Opponents of the free movement frequently emerge because certain academics and political figures argue that it is deceptive (Vaughan-Williams 2015; Van Mol and De Valk 2016). The EU's strict control over its external borders, which are the entry points for immigrants, involves efforts to harmonise Member States' immigration and asylum policies. Integrated Border Management (IBM) is one such joint management structure that contributes to border control (Mountz and Kempi 2014; European Parliament 2018). Harmonising entry conditions and procedures into the EU forms the core of the EU's immigration policy, emphasising the effective use of IT systems and technologies such as EURODAC, VIS, and SIS (European Commission 2015).

Sovereign States must adapt their laws and policies on immigration to align with national interests while simultaneously changing to meet international obligations to maintain the efficacy and efficiency of immigration governance (Wasem, 2018). This adaptation is what constructivists emphasise as a necessity for neighbouring or bordering States to harmonise their "migration policies based on shared social, economic, political and cultural identities and interests" (Iwuoha and Mbaegbu 2021, p.270). This approach indicates the need for a more cohesive and harmonious relationship between these states in managing migration. In the context of Finnish immigration, these regulatory frameworks include the nation's migration policies, the Aliens Act, and the adherence to both EU and international regulations. Finland formulates its migration policies based on crucial governmental documents such as the "Government's Migration Policy," and the "Government's Action Plan on Asylum" (Immigration Department, 2018, p. 9). The overarching aims of these policies in governing immigration are to facilitate immigration that enhances public finances, addresses labour shortages, and internationalises the Finnish economy. Also, various institutions in Finland manage immigration, with the Ministry of the Interior playing a central role. According to the Finnish Ministry of the Interior (2018, p.18), labour migration in Finland has for years occurred without detailed "strategic planning and coordination by the public authorities in the areas of directing recruitments, the recruitment measures used, or the placement of the labour to be recruited in different sectors or occupations". This assertion emphasises the need for actors involved in immigration governance to incorporate these considerations into their policy and decision-making processes.

The Finnish Aliens Act, serving as the legal framework for governing immigrants in Finland, ensures the governance and orderly processing of matters affecting immigrants. This legal instrument also supports international and asylum protection, emphasising the respect for the fundamental human rights of immigrants. The Act takes into account certain aspects of the EU's rules and international agreements, which are binding on Finland (Finnish Ministry of the Interior 2018). While the Finnish Aliens Act of 1991 has undergone several changes (by April 2019, the Aliens Act has been amended 78 times) since its enactment, ongoing inconsistencies and background changes necessitate its periodic reviews (IOM 2004; Näre 2020). Historically, Finland is committed to international cooperation in safeguarding asylum-seekers and refugees, which it demonstrated during the 2015 crisis when the number of asylum-seekers increased tenfold (Wahlbeck 2019a). Although there were some political disagreements, Finland affirmed its dedication to international protection by maintaining open borders. Finland also actively supported the EU's relocation efforts by accepting the

required number of asylum-seekers. However, according to Wahlbeck (2019a), the Finnish Government's wavering stance during the crisis was unexpected, given the country's strong alliance with the EU and its commitment to international asylum missions.

4.1.1 EU or Supranational Level Interactions

Interactions at this level usually comprise diverse representatives and delegates from different countries that constitute the Member States of the Union and sometimes third-party organisations (Porumbescu 2019). However, since the interest of this research is on migration, the discussion centres mainly on institutions involved in migration management. This level makes decisions and policies beyond the states' politics but not necessarily above them. This assertion suggests that although decision and policymaking at the EU level seem above the states, the Member States' sovereignty implies that accepting and implementing agreed policies rests with the Member States (European Commission 2015; OECD 2017; Niemann and Zaun 2018). According to an interviewee:

> The [primary] task (…) of the European level is to create [a] sort of overarching framework for immigration. Thus, [.....] the legislative framework is for the EU to set up. [However], the most [crucial] task, if you like, is that for anything that is about labour migration, the Member States are [entirely] in charge of the numbers of how many non-EU nationals they want to admit into their territory (Interview with SS 2021).

The EU engages with the Member States concerning labour migration but plays a subtle role, as outlined above. Caviedes (2004, p.290) argues that "the Commission has shown sensitivity toward the Member States' sovereignty concerns and eschewed attempting to assume direct legislative authority for fear of their veto powers". For example, the EU introduced the framework for the Blue Card scheme, but the Member States are to acknowledge and implement the directives when needed. Directives are legal instruments transposed by the Member States into national laws for implementation (Mancheva et al. 2023). The earlier argument means that at the supranational level, national policies are coordinated through the open method of coordination, "a system promoted by the Lisbon treaty in line with the principle of subsidiarity" (Porumbescu 2019, p.37; Maggetti and Trein 2019). Caviedes (2004, p.289) noted that:

> In a bid to stimulate more dynamic change, the Commission has proposed introducing the open method of coordination (OMC) in the realm of immigration policy to encourage countries to advance their levels of national policy experimentation and coordination through a non-binding yet common governance mechanism.

This approach offers the Commission the mechanism to influence the immigration policy of Member States, but the actual pressure to legislate remains with the Member States instead of decisions coming from the supranational level.

For instance, Finland is actively represented in all policy decision-making levels and their corresponding implementation concerning all issues affecting the EU (Interview with RK 2020; Finnish Ministry of the Interior 2018). This involvement of the national level (Finland) in all aspects of the decision-making at the EU level depicts what MLG interaction promotes (Aalberts 2004), while Constructivism emphasises that EU governance is "constantly produced and reproduced by mutually constituted practices and structures" (Búzás 2006, p.54). For instance, during the 2015-2016 migration crisis:

> Finland took part in EU-level cooperation and acts of solidarity. In addition, Finland participated in relocating asylum-seekers from Greece and Italy and fulfilled its quota obligation in September 2017. Finland participated in the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) operations by nominating experts to EASO's Asylum Intervention Pool (AIP). The Reception Unit also took part in cooperation with EASO. Experts from the Finnish Immigration Service [provided] training on the country of origin information to Italian and Bulgarian authorities and in implementing the hotspot operations in Italy and Greece, among other projects. The Finnish Border Guard took part in the Frontex-coordinated joint operations on the Mediterranean Sea and at the land borders in South-Eastern Europe (EMN 2017, p.12).

The excerpt above indicates Finland's engagements in the EU's immigration governance within the MLG setting. Typically, it shows the nature of involvement at the EU level; thus, different Member States acting within a common framework outside their national borders. The nature of governing immigration at the EU level is usually sensitive. This sensitivity is because the personalities, domestic politics, opinions, interests, and alliances of the different Member States come into play, demanding solidarity from all the Member States (Interview with SS 2021) to attain meaningful results. Solidarity facilitates unity, justice, dignity, and cooperation, contributing to the well-being and resilience of individuals and communities within the MLG setting. It serves as a foundation for building a more inclusive, just, and compassionate society (Uçarer 2022). Solidarity has long been embedded within the EU's integration framework, with its origin being a fundamental principle within the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Its significance is acknowledged in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and the introduction of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFR), which shows its essentiality to the Union's mission (Joppe 2021). In spite of its centrality, its precise definition remains conspicuously absent from the Treaties and the

jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). At its core, however, solidarity represents a collective commitment to support and assist one another, particularly in times of adversity or crisis, fostering cohesion and resilience within the Union (Gerhards et al. 2018). It represents the notion of "unity in diversity," which shows the interconnections between the Member States and the community spirit of standing together in chasing common objectives, be it economic prosperity, social justice, or environmental sustainability. Solidarity, however, goes beyond just economics or policy into various aspects of European society, including healthcare, education, and migration. It emphasises why addressing disparities and inequalities, both within and among Member States, through concerted action and shared sacrifice is essential. However, the ambiguity surrounding solidarity also engenders debates and divergent interpretations, reflecting the diverse socio-political landscapes across Europe. Some contend that solidarity should be primarily construed as a moral imperative, transcending legal obligations and institutional frameworks. Others advocate for a more pragmatic approach, emphasising the need for concrete mechanisms and policies to operationalise solidarity effectively. The high influx of asylum-seekers in 2015 and 2016, for instance, revealed further practical divisions challenging transnational solidarity (Katsanidou et al. 2022). For example, Rosendahl and Ercanbrack (2015, paragraphs. 8-9) reported that:

> Juha Sipila said there was work to do with The Finns (True Finns) on several issues, including spending cuts, immigration and the EU. The Finns promoted less austerity than the Center party and called for cutting Finland's refugee quota as well as EU payments. However, the Finns leader Timo Soini told reporters he was open to some compromises.

The quote above indicates how domestic political negotiations, policies, and decisions influence EU-level negotiations within the MLG relationship. Practically, it depicts how the MLG relationship manifests itself in finding solutions at the EU level from a constructivist perspective. Hence, Finland, just like the other Member States, must carefully negotiate its domestic politics and policies at the supranational level in order for them to be acceptable to the various stakeholders at the national and local levels. It corresponds that if domestic politics prolongs, it delays the position Finland takes at the EU level since Finland, for instance, does not negotiate or take a stance at the EU level without it first going through Parliament (Interview with SK and VS 2022, Finnish Parliament 2023). Regarding this argument, Kohler-Koch and Rittberger (2006) questioned how conventional checks and balances are still possible within such a complex multilevel relationship. This contention makes Finland's MLG relationship with the EU interesting because the system has worked

well for Finland despite the complexity and bureaucracy involved. The Finnish Parliament serves as a form of check and balance machinery in EU-Finland's affairs (OECD 2010). Thus, according to the Finnish Parliament (2023), compared with many other Member States, the Finnish Parliament plays a substantial role in EU matters. Dolinar (2010) also emphasised that EU matters that affect national legislation should involve parliaments, which supports the role of the Finnish Parliament's involvement in EU matters.

However, immigration governance at the supranational level needs to be considered a unified whole instead of fragmented pieces where Member States take individual positions (OECD 2017; Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk 2019; European Commission 2020). The European Commission (2015) asserted that no Member State could or can solely handle migration tasks. The Commission, thus, proposes unanimity, but some Member States can prevent various meaningful attempts at attaining uniformity within the EU level, especially in sensitive policy areas such as immigration. These hesitations can intensify governance difficulties and usually occur when such actors believe their national interests are at stake (Panebianco 2022). In cases of reluctance, Member States may prefer to implement their choice alone or form alliances or blocs (Interview with SS 2021). For instance, Rouet (2016, p.7) noted that:

> The governments of the Visegrád group and Romania insist that at the external borders of the Union, they want firmness and strict border control and seem hostile to the reception of refugees and migrants.

Therefore, a common cause for complexity at the supranational decision-making level is the policy crisis that can hinder interactions at the supranational level (Panizzon and Riemdijk 2019). For instance, it has been highlighted above that Finland actively negotiates its national stance, and in the excerpt above, the Visegrád group and Romania are advocating a specific position. If Finland's national position differs from that of the Visegrád group and Romania, Finland needs to advocate its national position actively or form an alliance with other Member States who hold similar positions. This complex pattern of decision-making at the EU level makes it usually difficult for the Member States to arrive at a common front on issues to be resolved, which prolongs the decision-making. The European Commission (2020, p.1) stresses the need for immigration policies that cut across all the critical policy areas from "free movement in the Schengen area, safeguarding fundamental rights, ensuring security and filling skill gaps". Achieving this requirement depends on "reinforcing" solidarity measures and sharing responsibility among the Member States (Terrón A. and

Pinyol 2018, p.6). Interestingly, one finding of this PhD study is that solidarity[4] is currently rated among the top priorities of the EU (Interview with TK 2020). Hence, how the Member States respond to solidarity amongst themselves as a way of influencing the various decisions taken and policies made at the EU level to attain their goals is a topical issue that informs the different immigration policies of the EU (Interviews with TK 2020 and SS 2021). Various challenges have facilitated a particular emphasis on solidarity measures in the recently introduced New EU Pact. For example, according to Coman et al. (2020, p.12), "the 2015 refugee crisis showed the limitations of solidarity among the Member States" in managing immigration, thus requiring extra clarifications and amendments to appease the support of the Member States.

Similarly, Jyrki Katainen's government programme in 2011 underscored the importance of the EU to Finland. That Government's programme considered the EU a "natural political community whose development and actors enhance Finland's stability, prosperity and security" (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2011, p.24). Also, as a small country with limited resources, the Finnish authorities have concerns about taking a solo approach to resolving issues like immigration (Interview with TK and IH 2020), thus increasing their presence on the European stage. This finding reveals that resources and non-material power (for instance, advocating positions and defending them, having an external EU border) significantly determine how a country can influence the EU's policy decision-making process. It also indicates that performing tasks in unison is perceived as more acceptable and influential than going solo (European Commission 2020; Kooiman 2003). One of the interviewees emphasised this contention that:

> We can say that on the Finnish side, solidarity is vital, and if all Member States take a left-alone stance in such situations, then we are more rivals. So, we see solidarity as if we are doing it together. There must be all kinds of different things in our collective toolbox regarding solidarity. Of course, as you mentioned, we also have a long external border (Interview with TK 2020).

On the EU side, the European Commission made a similar statement, which supports the quote above that:

> No Member State can effectively address migration alone … we need a new, more European approach. This requires using all policies and tools at our disposal – combining internal and external policies to best effect. All actors: Member States, EU institutions, International Organisations, civil society, local authorities and third

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[4] This is explained and given further emphasis in the next Chapter from pages 138-142.

countries, need to work together to make a common European migration policy a reality (EC 2015: 2 as seen in King and Russell 2016, pp. 12-13).

The European Commission expects a strong cohesion between the various levels within the MLG setting. This expectation articulated by the European Commission implies a comprehensive influence beyond the mere formation of behavioural patterns. Specifically, it means that the EU aspires not only to influence the actions of individuals and respective governments of Member States but also to shape their preferences and identities actively (Pollack 2020). At the EU level, the European Commission (2020) intends to identify all forms of solidarity, ensuring that all Member States make meaningful contributions to guarantee support for those most under pressure, referred to as solidarity sponsorship. This communication is consistent with this research's finding that solidarity measures are necessary at the EU level to get the involvement of all the Member States in a common agenda that benefits all. However, getting all the Member States into a unanimous stance can be tricky, especially judging from the 2015-2016 migration crisis (European Commission 2020) and the lack of consensus among the Member States (Terron and Pinyol 2018). For example, the inoperability of the Dublin Convention, push-backs of migrants on the Mediterranean and viewpoints of the Member States during the crisis can explain the difficulty in achieving solidarity and problem-solving during an emergency and regular policy decision-making and implementation (Panebianco 2022). According to Heiman et al. (2019, p.208), although formalised in Article 80 of the TFEU, the meaning of solidarity remains vague in its application. Therefore, how smaller and bigger States influence decision-making to execute them differently will be a more significant factor when considering solidarity measures and contributions at this level.

How much of a burden a Member State carries or foresees can also determine how it reacts to solidarity measures at this level. For instance, during the 2015-2016 crisis, Greece, Italy and Malta had almost all the migrants because they were the first entry points (Interviews with TK 2020 and SS 2021). The Dublin III Convention meant that these countries were responsible for those migrants (Ambrosini 2018; Scholten and Penninx 2016) on their territories. However, with the vast number of immigrants, they requested help from the other EU Member States via the principles of solidarity and burden-sharing. This study supports the complexity and unpredictability of the outcomes of solidarity and equal sharing of responsibility as the nature of interaction at the supranational level. This argument suggests that the EU is confronted with an arduous effort to achieve this goal. Attaining this goal requires unanimity and equal responsibility during crises and regular times, as stated earlier.

This idea may solidify the EU's approaches toward a future-proof and robust migration governance system. Hence, the European Commission (2020) declared in its New Pact that all Member States must regularly contribute to solidarity measures and undertake these responsibilities evenly. Porumbescu's (2019) argument also emphasises the challenges faced by the supranational level to develop proper measures capable of tackling problems resulting from the arrival of numerous TCNs into the EU.

As emphasised in Chapter 2, governing immigration at the EU level also involves making decisions concerning Frontex operations, which Finland supports and avails all forms of resources towards its operations (Interview with RK and IH 2020). This active involvement is also because, as stated earlier in this chapter, the Finnish authorities believe in EU-level cooperation to attain meaningful results, particularly in immigration governance issues (especially deportation, which is discussed in Chapter 6). Typically, Frontex operations involve roadblocks, intervening and assisting migrants in the Mediterranean, and executing mass deportation orders (Interview with IH 2020; Ekelund 2014). For example, from 2006 to 2016, Frontex coordinated the joint operations on charter flights (European Court of Auditors 2019). The Finnish Prime Minister's office (2011 p.24) articulated that Finland will continue to engage in critical EU projects as much as possible, as the rules demand. This statement conveys Finland's position of commitment and engagement in the activities of Frontex in the EU.

Although actions, processes, and decision-making at the EU level are essential, how the national and local institutions collectively perform their roles to influence the overall activities at the supranational level is equally important. Wolff (2020, p.239, 242) argues that the EU's Member States entrust parts of their authorities, competencies and jurisprudence to the EU level in ways that favour their "national policy goals". Such phenomenon is evident from the frequent "tug-of-war" between "the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament". For instance, Terrón and Pinyol (2018, p.4) suggest that the "reluctance of the Member States to surrender some of their competencies to reach unanimous agreements in immigration policies" has contributed to the delays in developing "common immigration and asylum policies". Hence, this research contends that major immigration management issues and decision-making are competencies from the national level (Interviews with IH, TK 2020 and SS 2021), which is a typical combination of Type I and II MLG. This argument aligns with those of Aalberts (2004) and Bevir (2009), who argue that the state remains a key actor in EU matters and the centrifugal point in the top-down and bottom-up relationships within the MLG interactions. Usually, the supranational level issues directives that are transposed into

national laws by the Member States. For example, a more extensive and "an increasing proportion of the Finnish law" (up to 80 per cent in some policy areas) comes from the EU directives (OECD 2010, p.117). These assertions mean that the national level mainly performs the various immigration governance responsibilities due to their sovereignty within the MLG relationship. Terrón and Pinyol (2018, p.11) contend that, traditionally, "immigration policies have remained exclusively to the states because it affects their territories and population". However, the MLG relationship suggests that the interactions at each governance level contribute in one way or another to the attainment of sustainable immigration management and benefits for EU citizens (Dolinar 2010; Scholten 2012). This statement contradicts the previous one, which stated that immigration governance competencies are mainly national level based. It, however, suggests that the national level serves as the focal point from which the various levels emerge in MLG's context: at the national level, sovereignty is pooled towards the supranational level, and authority is delegated to sub-national actors.

Hence, such a relationship typically entails dynamic, complex, and collaborative encounters involving compromises in meeting the diverse needs and expectations of the many actors. Non-fulfilment of expectations within this entangled relationship can breed disappointments, dissatisfactions, and upsets, leading to complicated negotiating processes. Geddes and Scholten (2016) emphasise that EU member countries promote closer ties because of European integration, which represents joint immigration governance efforts. The totality of issues surrounding migration and immigration, in particular, is therefore not about each country acting alone, as communicated by the European Commission (2020). Instead, considerations should be given to others within this interactive network of policy and decision-making to simplify the associated complexities, reflecting the true nature of MLG.

However, Coman et al. (2020, p.15) argued that "decisions and policymaking at the EU level depend mainly on the domestic capability and coordination of national policies". These national policies and decisions are undertaken predominantly by groups, committees, national experts, specialist officers and civil servants. The assertion supports the argument in this research that the national level institutions of Finland are proactive in cooperation and collaboration, bearing in mind that competencies spread across various actors and a solo approach is burdensome and possibly achieves less.

4.1.2 National Level Interactions

As mentioned throughout the thesis, different institutions in Finland cooperate in immigration governance by performing various roles to attain a common goal:- the

management of immigration. From the data collected, immigration governance is practicable when the same systems functionally address issues regularly and when there is pressure on the system (for example, the migration crisis in 2015). A typical example is that Finland managed immigration before the 2015-2016 migration crisis and had to govern it during and after the crisis; a case study of this scenario is discussed later in Chapter 6 of this PhD thesis. However, although the authorities believe they handled the situation based on the systems they had in place (Interview with KR 2022), it may have been a different scenario if the pressure on Finland was similar to that which the Mediterranean States, like Greece or Italy, experienced during the crisis. Thus, a system may deal with frequent migration issues and small numbers of migrants, like Finland's, in the 2015-2016 migration crisis. It may not withstand undue pressure like the fight against illegal/irregular migration, which is a significant issue in migration governance. For instance:

> The refugee crisis in 2015-2016 revealed significant shortcomings and the complexity of managing a situation, which affects the different Member States in different ways. It unearthed genuine concerns and brought to the surface differences which need to be acknowledged and overcome (European Commission 2020, p.1).

The preceding passages explore the idea that while Finland's migration system may effectively handle routine migration challenges, it might face difficulties under more significant and intense pressures, especially when dealing with issues like illegal or irregular migration. The comparison to the experiences of Mediterranean States during the migration crisis serves as a point of reference for understanding the potential limitations of Finland's system in handling different scenarios. The 2015-2016 crisis explored in Chapter 6 indicates that crisis can challenge how immigration is governed routinely. As mentioned above, the practical challenges of solidarity during a crisis is that routine practices are either put on hold or not strictly followed. That is, regular and strict practices may delay the urgent need for solutions during the crisis and may have significant repercussions. Immigration governance actors, therefore, develop crisis response mechanisms to reflect the current situation, not entirely neglecting routine practices since routine regulations can still be applicable in certain scenarios. Such is the complexity and dynamism involved in immigration governance especially involving numerous actors on a multilevel. Figure 3 below depicts the structure of institutional actors in immigration governance in Finland. These actors regularly interact via face-to-face or remote meetings when necessary (Interviews with JL, RK and JT 2020). Some engage in routine cooperation, while others only participate as needed or when a crisis

requires collaborative services or efforts, showcasing the nature of interactions at the national level.

Figure 3 Structure of the migration administration in Finland
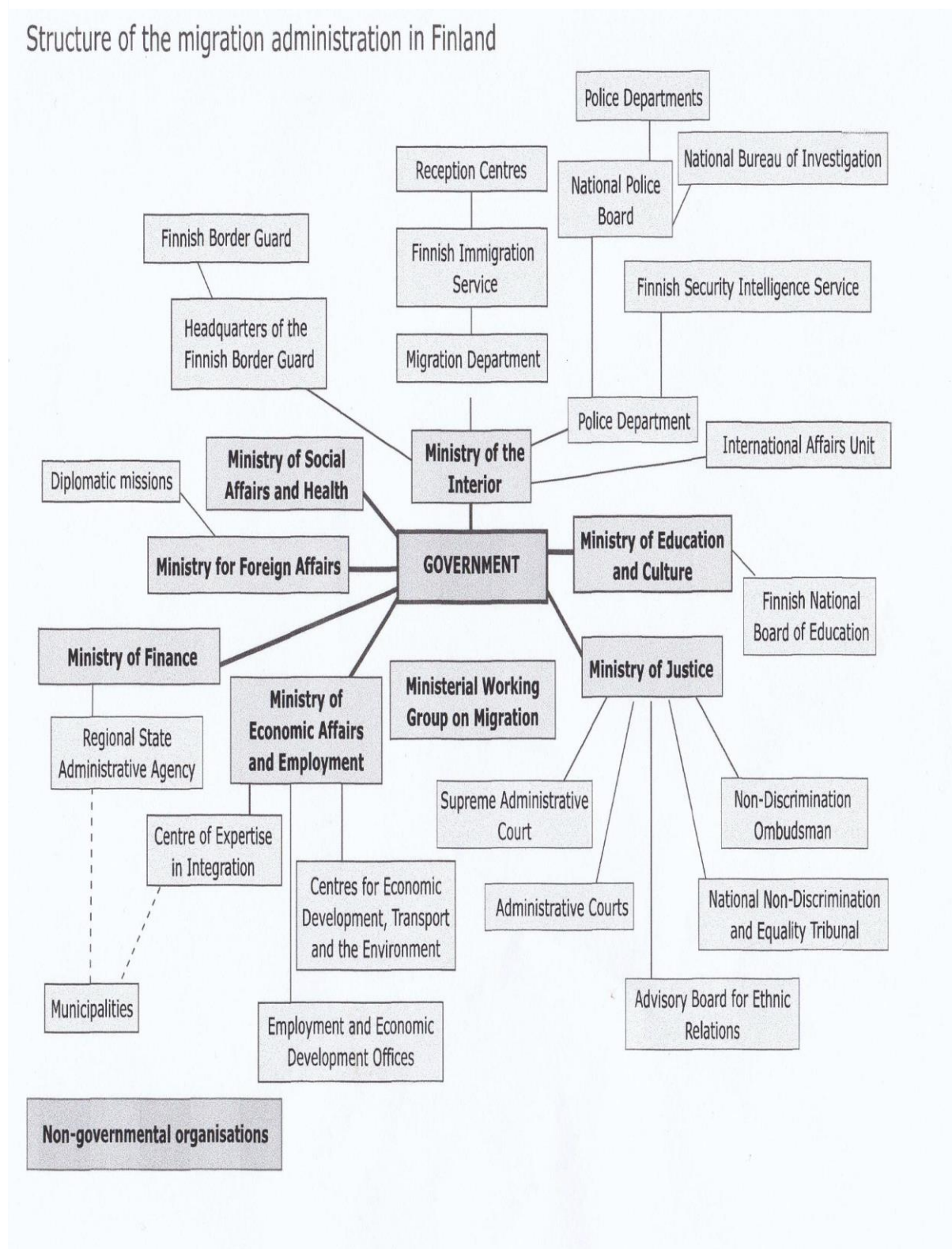
Source: Annual Migration Report of Finland (2019).

From the diagram above, the links show interactions between the different national level authorities and their administrative branches. The empirical data reveals that high-level institutions steer some of the institutions within the national level collaboration by making resources, expertise, and policies available to enable their smooth operations, as depicted in

the diagram above. Policy decision-making and implementation concerning immigration involve all the relevant actors, which helps foster closer cooperation (Interview with RK 2020). For instance, the MoI usually spearheads these immigration governance roles by coordinating immigration management matters on both vertical and horizontal levels within the MLG relationship.

From the preparation to the execution of policies, there are political processes, decision-makers, institutions and other actors involved in the management of immigration. Due to this, this study examines the decision-making and implementation bodies and other agencies or institutions that perform various roles at different levels of the multilevel governance of immigration. This inquiry is because no single government department or agency in Finland is mandated to or has all the requisite know-how to manage all aspects of immigration unilaterally (Wasem, 2018). These cross-cutting immigration competencies of the various institutions enable interactions to take place at a multilevel in governing immigration. For instance, during Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government, he advocated for closer cooperation and collaboration among the institutions that deal with asylum at different stages to promote and ensure efficiency, led by the Ministry of the Interior (Immigration Department 2018). According to Finnish national law, law enforcement agencies are obliged to cooperate among themselves in the performance of their duties. In some cases, crossing administrative boundaries is permitted if circumstances demand (Finnish Border Guard Undated). The following paragraphs discuss the institutions in figure 3 above and their roles in immigration governance.

Firstly, the Finnish Ministry of Interior is the government institution generally responsible for migration affairs. This Ministry leads in organising the other institutions involved in the management of immigration. It also has a Migration Department, which assists in the development of legislation concerning migration and nationality. This department influences the granting of citizenship and asylum and policies affecting the arrival, removal, and residency of immigrants, mainly in the political domain (IOM 2004). It collaborates with other agencies, departments, and actors in the governance of immigration. Its principal administrative agency is the Finnish Immigration Service, which it guides on implementation issues (Finnish Immigration Service 2012).

The Finnish Immigration Service is the institution responsible for making decisions regarding residence permits (First Residence, Extended, Permanent, Student, work and Family), asylum-seekers' applications, issuing deportation orders, granting or rejecting citizenship and declaration applications, refugee issues and maintaining the reception

system. It offers professional intelligence and information for political decision-making to the Ministry of the Interior for international as well as national cooperation (Finnish Immigration Service 2019). This institution also receives and registers the applications of EU citizens, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, exercising their right to residency in the Member States when they reside for more than three months. This role was performed previously by the Finnish Police but changed in 2017 (Finnish Immigration Service 2017; Immigration Department 2018). This institution is of significance because of the research's interest in the implementation aspects of immigration governance, which this institution is mandated to perform. Applicants for asylum, residence permits, and refuge served with both positive and negative decisions by the Finnish Immigration Service are encouraged to make appeals at the administrative courts of Finland.

The Ministry of Justice gives guidance on the making of laws governing immigration, immigration management and the enforcement of decisions on immigrants. The Supreme and Administrative courts under the auspices of this Ministry are the final adjudicators on appeals made by immigrants regarding the decisions served to them by the FIS. Particularly, applicants who are served negative decisions from the FIS, as mentioned earlier and think that the decision should have favoured them often seek redress in the appeal courts (Finnish Immigration Service 2012, Finnish Ministry of Interior 2020). This aspect of being the final arbiters in decision-making on residency applications, viz they can overturn the decisions made by the FIS from negative to positive decisions, makes this institution relevant in immigration governance.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a significant role in migration management, especially on the international front at the numerous diplomatic missions and embassies abroad. (The Finnish Border Guards 2018, The Finnish Ministry of Interior 2020). This Ministry aims to tackle forced migration mainly in the sending countries through cooperation and collaboration. It has many responsibilities vis-à-vis foreign relations. In terms of migration, however, it does the following among others: EU cooperation, bilateral relations with the countries of origin and transit, cooperation and influencing policies in international organisations, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, mediation and support for dialogues, human rights, crisis management and security policy, trade and development policy and consular services (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019). Within this Ministry, the 'Unit of General EU Affairs and Coordination' supervises a working group which is charged with migration-related issues and collaborates with the Police and Border Guards in the issuance of Visas.

Border management offers invaluable contributions to the governance of immigration. The Finnish Border Guard (FBG) performs six significant roles, but of primary interest in this research is its role in immigration and border surveillance. Regarding this, the FBG is responsible for controlling Finland's land, water, and air borders. Travellers from outside the Schengen area need to go through border controls and security checks, which are part of the mandate of the FBGs (Finnish Border Guards, 2019). The FBGs, in conjunction with the Police and the FIS, oversee the deportation of TCNs out of Finland. The FBGs also make decisions (concerning Visas and Residence permit holders) to allow or refuse entry into the country at the various border checkpoints. When asylum-seekers arrive at the border, the FBGs receive their asylum applications and establish their identity and routes travelled before submitting them to the FIS to decide on the application. They perform this role in conjunction with the Finnish Police (Finnish Immigration Service, 2012). This role in the governance of immigration is significant as they are the final point of entry into and exit of the country.

Also, the Police Department performs implementation roles in immigration management. In terms of dealing with asylum-seekers, the Finnish Police, together with the FBGs, are the first points of contact in the application process (thus receiving the application and determining the identity and routes travelled). They team up with the FBGs to carry out deportation orders after the FIS has denied permit applications, as stated earlier. In the event that an individual, following the denial of their residence permit application, chooses to challenge the decision through an appeal to the administrative courts and receives an unfavourable outcome and yet chooses not to depart Finland willingly, the law enforcement agencies, especially the Police authorities, undertake the task of deporting the individual to their designated destination. Additionally, they are responsible for operations concerning the Schengen area. They carry out migration control duties within the country with the assistance of other authorities like the Customs Officials, Tax authorities, and the Border Guards (The Finnish Border Guards 2018).

Integrating migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees into the Finnish Society is another crucial aspect of immigration governance, which this study did not elaborate on. The discussion here only emphasises the role of this Ministry in the governance structure depicted above. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is the government body executing this integration responsibility. Its duties in terms of immigration changed at the beginning of the year 2020 when it assumed responsibility for labour migration matters from the Ministry of Interior. Also, it stimulates employment opportunities among immigrants and oversees the drafting of integration legislation. The Ministry of Economic Affairs plans to increase

Labour Migration and improve the labour market skills of immigrants already living in Finland (Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2020). This activity is geared towards a reduction in the country's high dependency ratio.

Education is critical to assimilating migrants into Finland. The Ministry of Education and Culture facilitates education and training programmes for immigrants at various levels of education. Some immigrants do not have any education, while others have low levels of education and need some level or form of education and skills to integrate. They also exchange or evaluate the certificates of those immigrants who have some education from their departure countries and against the Finnish standards in order to know what level of educational assistance is required of them. It also oversees immigration issues, including culture, sport, youth work, and religion (The Finnish Ministry of Interior 2020). These education and skill training mostly take place at the municipal and city levels in Finland. Ministry of Education and Culture has, for instance, designed a new programme which specifically targets young adult refugees and immigrants. Finnish language skills are usually a priority in integrating immigrants into Finnish society, and those programmes had to be B1 level (based on the common European framework of reference for languages). The integration programmes are funded by the city and are established as a response to the refugee inflow in Finland and the prolonged duration of integration training in the country (Masoud et al. 2021).

The municipalities of Finland provide essential services for permanent resident immigrants just like those provided for other residents. Individual municipalities also decide whether to receive quota refugees and asylum-seekers who have been issued residence permits (The Finnish Ministry of Interior 2020; Heino and Jauhiainen 2020\). The Immigration Unit of the City of Helsinki provides advisory services and helps with the integration process of asylum-seekers and people in similar situations (The City of Helsinki 2020). Also, the Health and Social Services Unit provides customised support to individuals and their families throughout the integration process with the aim of cultivating self-reliance and promoting meaningful engagement within the community. This institution also offers specialised services for undocumented migrants. These various actors socially and politically interact to make decisions that feed into the broader MLG framework.

Governance interaction during regular decision-making and policymaking in Finland follows the type I MLG. This study maintains that Finland manages immigration through a blend of types I and II MLG because a crisis can trigger type II. It implies that a combination of types I and II, and not restrictively adhering to either of them, may reduce the complexities

involved in the MLG process, consistent with what Leo and August (2009) suggested. A counter-argument by Spehar et al. (2017, p.116) indicates that the "flexibility and responsiveness" of the innovations MLG brings into decision-making can also "create disjointed governance where actors" are not always in agreement. However, Maggetti and Trein (2019) assert that MLG makes sense of the complex interactions between a multiplicity of actors across diverse levels occurring within a generic and territorially bounded polity (Type I) and specific, overlapping and unlimited scope (Type II).

For instance, in the diagram above, although the MoI is responsible for coordinating almost all the institutions, every institution involved at the national level has its degree of authority, operation and expertise (Interview with TK 2020). The usual relationship is three-fold (Maggetti and Trein 2019); viz, they interact horizontally as contemporaries, vertically as subordinates or as instructional, and cooperative at the national level. The local level institutions are primarily in a vertical or collaborative relationship with the national level ones, while the national level ones are mainly horizontal or parallel interactions (Interview with FL 2020; Papadopoulos 2006). Although the national level institutions have different authorities, some sometimes have the same power and competency to perform the same role on behalf of others without having to negotiate a deal in that respect. For instance, the Finnish Police can act in the Border Guards' capacity to establish the identities of asylum-seekers and vice-versa, as described previously. It suggests that decisions made by one authority are final and respected by the other (Interviews with IH and JL 2020). However, these levels are not just emergent parallels but are connected, as depicted by the MLG framework (Maggetti and Trein 2019).

These findings indicate that cooperation is more intense at the operational level, enabling smooth implementation and cross-administration between all relevant authorities. In particular, cooperation, as a whole, is a common characteristic of Finnish authorities (Interviews with RK, JT, TK, JL and HN 2020). This argument is, however, limited to the examined institutions, as they assert that collaboration represents an enhanced approach to addressing issues. Generally, cooperation is regarded as a means of managing institutional diversities and varying opinions across different levels. This statement implies that collaborative practices have become part of the daily norms of these institutions, contributing to the development of their institutional culture, a sentiment echoed by nearly all interviewees. Constructivists argue that "natural or social laws" do not predetermine our experiences in social and political settings but are influenced mainly by cultural traditions, societal norms, and individual choices (Bevir 2009, p.84; Weber and Morris 2010; Porcaro 2011; Tanil 2014). That is, social and political practices are the result of human decisions,

which are guided by contingent meanings and beliefs that vary depending on specific contexts. For instance, the Social and Health Services Unit of the City of Helsinki collaboratively evaluate the service needs of migrants and other relevant actors and constructs a tailored integration strategy, aligning with the goals and requisite support systems of the immigrants. They make these integration-enhancing social services accessible through both collective participation and digital platforms. This perspective highlights the importance of recognising the socially constructed nature of reality and the role of human agency in shaping it. For instance, an interviewee stated that:

> In Finland, we have a long tradition and co-tradition of working together regarding cooperation between the ministries. So, having critical persons from different ministries attend meetings and discussions is effortless. We also have some regular working groups, which are more or less tailored at the operational and ministerial levels and between those authorities, so we have good conditions to cooperate with different leaders. So that is very easy, of course, as a small country, it works because the authorities know each other (Interview with IK 2020).

The excerpt above presents cooperation as more straightforward when the country has a smaller population, whereby the authorities know each other and have an established functioning collaboration. However, the case of Finland shows that cooperation works because of the trust that public institutional actors have built among themselves and the acknowledgements given to the contributions of other key actors. The argument above aligns closely with that of Mancheva et al. (2023, p.19) that:

> The more restrictive instructions for collaborative governance in Finland, detailing who should participate and where, as well as delegating responsibilities to governmental and non-governmental actors, have resulted in not only what should be more accountable institutions but also what literature has defined as collaborative institutions with diverse actors representation.

The country's small population contributes to how easy it is for them to know each other and cooperate. Despite this contention, it could be possible to replicate such cooperation in countries with enormous populations, like Germany or France, given similar conditions. Also, other countries with smaller populations may not exhibit the same features as the Finnish authorities. This explanation does not undermine the claim above that trust among institutional actors facilitates easy cooperation in an MLG setting. This assertion supports the declaration of the European Committee of the Regions (2019, p.10) that:

Multilevel governance is essential to ensure active and equal participation of all levels of Government in a spirit of trust. This loyal cooperation between all levels is essential for the EU to be able to deliver on its objective of economic and social progress for its citizens wherever they live in a fully accountable, efficient and transparent way.

Cooperation can be complex, especially when involving non-governmental actors. The governmental actors must be willing and ready to cooperate with the non-governmental actors, giving away authority to them to perform specific responsibilities. In contrast, non-governmental actors must convince other actors within the MLG of the worth of their participation in these cooperative efforts (Interview with PH 2020). That is to say that they must earn the merit of such collaborative roles within the MLG interaction. Such cooperation can take the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the governmental and non-governmental institutions whereby specific tasks are entrusted to the non-governmental actors to perform (Interview with LK 2020), as exhibited by Type I MLG. This MoU can reduce the complexity and friction embedded in the interactions at this governance level. For example, during the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the FIS had an MoU with the Finnish Red Cross to operate the majority of Reception Centres for asylum-seekers and refugees across the country (Interviews with LK and PH 2020). This operation also involved cooperation with other institutions like the Police, FBG and the military in administering the Hotspot at the borders as governmental actors, demonstrating the pragmatic nature of MLG. Hence, this collaboration illustrates a typical character of how complex a partnership can be, yet concurrently active, a feature MLG proposes; based on the results of this Hotspot Approach. Likewise, disagreements over issues form part of the complicated nature of cooperating. Institutions do not always readily agree on matters as may be generally perceived. Deliberations, debates, and diverse opinions remain, complicating issues and making policy decision-making and implementation remarkable. For instance, various stakeholders like employers and universities proposed that the government expedite the processing of residence permits for migrants into Finland by shortening the processing time to one month (Interview with JT 2020). The process in this example is complex because it requires the cooperation of several authorities and a combination of resources. According to the interviewee (Interview with JT 2020), although they know this is a problem, they cannot solve it all because various disagreements and opinions remain. As a result, the government proposed redrafting this policy to consider ways to facilitate immigration into Finland (Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior 2018).

All the interviewees emphasised that such issues are more inclined to politics and the lack of the willpower to execute them. Pragmatically, the politics of restricting immigration is phenomenal in Finland's immigration governance by incumbents and oppositions in parliament/government (Wahlbeck 2019a). Thus, restricting immigration is regarded as a means of pleasing the opposition by the incumbents while simultaneously trying not to lose their support base (Interviews with AA and JA 2021). Hence, despite the Finnish authorities' awareness of the need to encourage immigration because of labour shortages resulting from the higher age dependency, they are simultaneously reluctant to execute this plan, as shown by the small number of the immigrant population in the country, depicted in Figure 1 in Chapter 1 of this study. In that context, for instance, some interviewees perceived immigration as a necessity for the sustainability of the Finnish welfare system and to develop unanimity at the European stage concerning immigration governance (Interview with FL and PH 2020). The interviewee said that:

> I do not even think immigration is a question of whether it is good or bad! It is necessary for a country like Finland because we have [an aged population]. We also actively try to find solutions to labour shortages, which have become a chronic problem for the Finnish labour market. We also help companies use the international talents that already reside in the area. So, as a country, we are currently in a situation where we must actively attract talent from abroad. Still, we also have to find new ways to use the international abilities that are already here because that talent is currently underutilised in the local labour market (Interview with FL 2020).

Similarly, former Finnish Minister of the Interior, Maria Ohisalo pointed out that:

> Finland needs more experts with diverse talent profiles to keep the wheels turning in society. The migration authorities must respond to this need by providing efficient services. In other Schengen countries, a national D visa is already in use for varying target groups in this regard (Schengenvisainfo news 2021).

This sentiment is echoed by a former Finnish Minister of Finance, Annika Saarikko that:

> Finland needs plenty of new employees from abroad as the number of older people requiring care continues increasing, age groups [are] becoming smaller, and the working-age population [is] shrinking. It has been estimated that the social and healthcare industry alone will need 30,000 new employees by the end of the decade (Teivainen -HT 2021, see also Lobodzinska 2011).

In framing its immigration policies in the EU context, Finland assumes that the development of a welfare system and the strengthening of citizens' well-being are supported by the Union's actions (Finnish Government 2021, p.8). Łobodzińska (2011) contends that Finland's dwindling labour force has economic consequences that require specific actions and changes, particularly in its immigration policy. The statistics on the population decline in Finland and the need to have more immigrants influence the perceptions of the authorities in formulating immigration policies, making decisions and implementing them. (Interviews with FL and RK 2020). However, with few immigrants and rigorous immigration policies, the Finnish authorities have perceived immigration differently. It can be concluded that Finland pursues robust immigration control instead of facilitating it.

This study found that Finland's local levels barely interact directly with EU-level policy decision-making. Instead, this level's actors primarily interact with national level institutions directly. However, they sometimes deal directly with the supranational level but on a different scale (Interviews with FL 2020 and SS 2021), for instance, on funded projects (Scholten and Penninx 2016). That means that cooperation within the MLG relationship is crucial, no matter the level at which the decisions occur. This argument reiterates the contention of Porumbescu (2019, p.37) that:

> Between the supranational level on the one hand and the national and sub-national level on the other hand, there is a relationship of institutional and functional interdependence rather than a hierarchy because the basis of the relations between the EU institutions and the Member States is represented by the principle of cooperation and the principle of subsidiarity.

The following sub-section elaborates on the nature, pattern, and relevance of the local level in the MLG interaction.

4.1.3   Local Level Interactions

As stated above, many of the institutions at the local level are also autonomous entities that connect with the national level institutions and other local ones alike in governing immigration in Finland. The nature of cooperation within this level usually depends on the issue at stake and the institution with jurisdiction over it (Interview with FL 2020). In this study, the local level actors are the usual recipients of immigrants and, hence, must plan and make decisions to accommodate them, usually in line with national policies (Terrón and Pinyol 2018). The inputs from this level are necessary because if they fail to execute their responsibilities (Interview with FL 2020), it affects the overall governance of immigration at the local level, extending upwards to the national and horizontally to other local levels

(Ponzo 2017; Caponio and Jone Correa 2018; Terron and Pinyol 2018; Heino and Jauhiainen 2020) and in the long run to the supranational level within the MLG relationship. Therefore, there is a direct connection between the local level and the national level and vice versa. How the local level institutions influence decisions at the national level reflects the kind of cooperation, coordination and attention they receive from the national level. An interviewee asserted that:

> We cooperate with a broad group of different actors, which is one of the many ways to achieve our goals! [We cannot] do [it] alone. I mean, immigration issues having to do with the integration and employment of internationals- those are the kinds of questions or issues we cannot resolve on our own. So cooperation, of course, lobbying the Ministry on things is necessary. I mean, that is something we do a lot! So that we can get them to do what we want and need (Interview with FL 2020).

The assertion above supports the arguments of Kooiman (2003) and the communication of the European Commission (2020) that no single actor has all it takes to solve all governance problems. The MLG relationship demands progressiveness and collaboration among the different actors in solving immigration issues. For instance, Terron and Pinyol (2018, p.11) contend that the initial reception and long-term residence of asylum-seekers and refugees must be organised in closer cooperation between local administration and national level actors. That is, relying solely on national level structures is insufficient for addressing all tasks in governing immigration because domestic politics and regulations alone lack the strength to achieve political outcomes that extend beyond the national level (Klinke 2017). Collaboration at the local level can take a multi-stake approach, like preparing various programmes for immigrants. For example, according to one of the interviewees at the local level, they are legally obliged to design a programme known as "The Integration Programme" every four years to improve the integration of migrants and encourage cooperation among all stakeholders. Through this programme, initiatives and innovations in providing immigrant services have taken different dimensions. A typical example of such innovation is a cooperative service delivery known as "International House Helsinki", established in 2017, where immigrants can access various service-providing authorities simultaneously (Interview with FL 2020). This service point offers a wide range of services to immigrants and employers under one roof to promote fast service delivery that facilitates integration. According to an interviewee (Interview with FL 2020), these interactions among the various authorities stimulate good cooperation in immigration governance in Finland. For example, according to the interviewee, this programme has received international and national acknowledgement and good feedback from stakeholders and beneficiaries

(Interview with FL 2020). What these mean for public policy decision-making and implementation is that each level can influence the process at its own level and also at the multilevel directly or indirectly (Scholten 2012). For instance, Heiman et al. (2019, p.209) noted that cities use their "network structures", such as Eurocities or solidarity cities, to influence migration policies at the EU level. Also, special Committees in the Finnish Parliament issue statements on EU matters and the Grand or Foreign Affairs Committee makes final decisions on the matter (Finnish Government 2020). Policymakers, decision-makers, and implementing agencies must, therefore, be aware of this potential and use it in negotiating relevant policies and decisions to facilitate their implementation.

However, to cooperate and influence decisions and policies at the national level, some local-level actors form networks like quasi-markets and partnerships (Torfing et al. 2012). Such networks give them a more united front in presenting their contributions during national level interactions. Within such a network, they discuss and find common ground on issues in advance, which they raise to influence national and EU decision-making and policymaking (Interview with LK 2020). That notwithstanding, the local level also interacts with national institutions through regular or scheduled meetings to discuss, negotiate and implement policies and programmes. For instance, Parliament can request further explanation or clarification on issues and therefore invite experts from the institutions to Parliament to discuss and negotiate (Interview with JA 2021). The MLG linkage displayed under such circumstances is that governance is taking place at the local level through making decisions and policies, which are promoted at the national level to influence the procedures, which are reflected at the EU level (Terron and Pinyol 2018).

4.2   Decision-making and Implementation in Regular Situation

This section presents how the EU and national levels regularly make decisions concerning migration. Routinely making decisions and implementing them can differ from a crisis. In this section, the analysis is one of how regular decision-making occurs. According to Wolff (2020), EU-level migration and asylum policies are relatively recent despite Europe's long-term experiences with migration. The decision-making at the EU level usually commences with a proposal from the Commission; in the case of migration governance, the DG HOMES performs such roles. These proposals can come from initiatives by the Commission to tackle identified issues or as part of their usual or ongoing programmes. They could also respond to requests or pressures from the Member States to find solutions to specific problems at that level (Interview with SS 2021). When developing these proposals, they go through various

processes[5] depending on the number of institutions involved. When drafted at the EU level, the Member States review the relevant documents and return them to the EU for finalisation based on their inputs, comments, and suggestions through various negotiations. In some cases, when Member States object to some content, they may ask for the revisions they want to see as inputs in the final policy document. Other actors may also prove challenging to deal with, implying that the EU must seek compromises. Usually, after a thorough decision-making process, the outcomes could be refuted, modified or allowed (Interview with SS 2021).

Usually, in the Finnish case, when the authorities receive the documents from the EU level, they must always go through Parliament to debate and make necessary amendments to declare Finland's position on the issue, which is done by the Grand Committee of Parliament (Interview with JA 2021). As mentioned above, the Finnish Parliament is always involved in EU matters, a process considered valuable (Interviews with AA and JA 2021; Interview with JT 2020) in preparing their stance on EU policies and decisions. This argument is consistent with the statement of the Finnish Parliament (2021, paragraph 1) that:

> After the European Union decides, the matter is considered in the plenary session of Parliament, whether to approve it or if new legislation is necessary due to the decision. EU legislation and especially directives often require amendments to national legislation. Parliament makes decisions in the usual order.

This excerpt indicates that the Finnish Parliament is an essential actor in national and EU-level decision-making because of their contributions within the MLG framework. The Finnish Parliament is actively linked to the EU because of this role. An OECD (2010, p.117) research described this approach as "an impressively inclusive and coordinated approach put in place to deal with EU regulatory affairs". Thus, the Ministries, the Parliament and other stakeholders are consulted in a carefully orchestrated approach from the Prime Minister's office (OECD 2010, p.117). Although this approach by Finland in its relationship with the EU seems interesting and described as impressive and coordinated (OECD 2010, p.117), there are some identified weaknesses. For example, the approach can "compromise the straightforward" and practical "transposition" of adopted EU directives (OECD 2010, p.118). This example suggests that Finland must establish its presence early in negotiations at the supranational and ensure that the flexibility required is built into the overall outcome

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[5] These various processes are not intended to be discussed in details in this study but the interest is rather on how the policy is approved by the Member States at the EU level before implemented.

to enhance the transposition. This argument means that Finland's approach to its relationship with the EU can become complex to the point of arguing whether it is necessary.

However, this system seems to work well for Finland despite its weaknesses. An interviewee emphasised that:

> Usually, if we can, we try to predict where the negotiations are going and when we inform the Parliament, we [leave] room for negotiation in the papers. So we try to, as I said, predict the result and, of course, work towards the results that the goal will remain within those limitations of Parliament. However, if needed, we have to go to the capital, and then the capital people prepare a kind of up-to-date position, which is then communicated to Parliament and debated again. [Nevertheless] I would say that in most of these matters, we are able to predict the results well enough that we can stay within the boundaries set by Parliament (Interview with VS, 2022).

Finland's relationship with the EU is dynamic yet complex. As argued above, despite some weaknesses of the approach, an OECD report in 2003 established that the structures and processes put in place to coordinate Finland's relation with the EU appear to be "consistent, coherent and functioning at a high level" (see OECD 2010, p.117-118). The following sub-sections examine regular decision-making and implementation within the EU.

4.2.1   Making Regular Decisions at the EU Level

EU Member States have some aspects of their migration policies and decisions harmonised at the EU level. For example, the free movement of persons, goods and services among the Member States (Heidbreder 2014) is harmonised. However, the Member States are reluctant to give other aspects to the EU level because they want to manage such at the national level (Interviews with TK 2020 and SS 2021; Terron and Pinyol 2018). For instance, labour migration of TCNs is an aspect where the Member States prefer to decide at the national level (Interview with SS 2021; Interviews with TK and JT 2020; Carmel 2014; Geddes and Scholten 2016; Terron and Pinyol 2018; Porumbescu 2019). The Member States are reluctant and sometimes defiant (Ambrosini 2018) to surrender these aspects because they want to pursue their domestic interests and sometimes due to opposition at the national level. The EU, therefore, does not interfere in such sensitive areas (Porumbescu 2019) but allows the national levels to decide while it gives the necessary directives. For instance, the Member States have different labour needs in their domestic market, and practically, the EU does not impose any particular integration policies or measures on the Member States (Interview with SS 2021). That is:

Article 79(5) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU stipulates that the EU Member States have the right to determine volumes of admission of third-country nationals coming from third countries to their territory to seek work, whether employed or self-employed (Wolff 2020, p.246).

This issue reflects the complex nature of the MLG relationship and decision-making and implementation. Wasem's (2018) argument supports this research's contention that governance at the EU level must incorporate national interests into policies and decisions to create a robust system. There are also debates that immigration decisions are still very much centred at the domestic (national) level, although the EU is increasingly actively involved (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Coman et al. 2020). However, with the national level taking centre stage, this MLG system seems to work quite well because the Member States retain their sovereignty but concurrently consider the more expansive EU views, directives and opinions that guide their actions. Undeniably, the needs of each Member State of the EU differ. These differences are such that the EU cannot satisfy them individually without dissatisfaction from some factions, which is why they sometimes resort to unanimity. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the EU has had several disagreements on policies and decisions, resulting in disappointments and futile efforts. For instance, the implementation of the relocation policy in 2015 was unsuccessful (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Wahlbeck 2019a,b; Coman et al. 2020; Interview with SS 2021, Panebianco 2022). Therefore, national level competencies play a significant role in the MLG relationship (Dolinar 2010), especially on immigration issues involving TCNs and other influential international organisations.

Meanwhile, this statement of the national level having a mainstay is contrary to the feature of the MLG concept, where all actors are supposed to be seen as playing an equal role in the relationship, referred to as the blurring of the line of authority (Spehar et al. 2017). This argument suggests that the sensitive nature of immigration decisions and the subsequent implementation efforts by the Member States of the EU present some limitations in how the MLG concept is understood. For example, there is a consensus on some fundamental entry requirements into the EU, like income, travel documents, and family ties (Interview with TK 2020). There is also a standard visa policy among the Schengen countries whereby anyone within the Schengen can travel freely within the zone as described at the beginning of this chapter. Thus, there are some directives on these common types of migrations, but the Members States still have much more room to determine these and how they also implement labour migration. For instance, they can decide their quota system for asylum, their residential requirements and many others (Interview with SS 2021). There is no standardised policy on labour migration compared to the rules and regulations concerning visas and entry

through external borders and the EU free movements. The EU does not have its own administrative mechanisms for implementing its decisions and policies; instead, it depends on the Member States (Treib 2014).

Finally, some Member States are concerned about not being on the same level regarding national wealth and population size (Ambrosini 2018; Interview with FL 2020) when making EU-level negotiations and decisions. For instance, the dichotomy between Western and Eastern European countries often shows the differences in national wealth, human rights issues and economic management. Wealthy nations ostensibly resist harmonisation, and the less wealthy ones do the same because of the fear of total domination by the so-called powerful countries (Wolff 2020). Therefore, the smaller or less powerful countries consider the more prominent nations as sometimes trying to influence decision-making at the EU level to their advantage because they possess more significant financial prudence (Interview with SS 2021).

One of the dynamics that this research sought to understand was how a small state like Finland can influence policy decision-making at the EU level or vice-versa. Finland is an active EU Member State and consequently quite influential in decision-making at the EU level by having representations and contributing meaningfully to all the high-level meetings. Civil servants in Finland can also indirectly influence decisions in the EU through representativeness (Interview with RK 2020). They do this through proactiveness at the national level in preparing various documents and the Ministers who attend meetings at the EU level. These indirect contributions to EU decisions are essential to understanding the nature of interaction within the MLG relationship because these civil and public servants influence policy negotiation outcomes. Some of these civil servants are also usually in attendance alongside the Ministers, assisting and briefing them on issues as discussions are underway, which is a crucial aspect of the MLG relationship of blurriness of the lines of authority. However, these civil servants are actors who "manage the machinery of government and implement policies over the long term" (Arnold et al. 2015, p.10). One interviewee emphasised that:

> Finland is, of course, represented in all EU formations and decisions made at the Ministerial level or the summit. However, we civil servants are acting in the preparation of those meetings. So, by being active, we can influence opinions and decision-making, proposing solutions to problems or formulations. We can be involved and outspoken at the EU level at that stage. (Interview with RK 2020).

One reason for Finland's active commitments and contributions to EU decision-making is that it regards the EU as a natural political formation whose development enhances Finland and the other Member States' stability, prosperity, and security (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2011; Finnish Government 2021). Finland's size, population-wise, does not prevent it from participating and expressing its views and opinions and contributing meaningfully to debates at the Commission's and working group levels and other high-profile levels of decision-making (Interview with RK 2020). Hence, Finland tries to be pragmatic, problem-solving-oriented, and forward-thinking and suggests solutions at the EU level.

However, if Finland disagrees with decisions at the EU level, it can disapprove of European unanimity. For instance, Finland abstained from voting on the relocation policy in 2015, although they participated during the implementation (Wahlbeck 2019b). Like other Member States, if there is a Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) and it loses the negotiation, Finland tries to explain its position and instead seeks a compromise (Interview with RK 2020). Finland is thus prepared and aware that interacting with the EU, as a Member State, frequently involves concessions, which the MLG concept depicts. For instance, Finland decided to abstain from the vote on the relocation policy due to strong opposition from domestic politics (Wahlbeck 2019b). Finland can also influence decisions by forming partnerships; - usually as part of the Nordic bloc (Interview with SS 2021; Thorhallsson and Wivel 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that a country's size may or may not influence how much power it possesses in decision-making. This argument is why they form blocs to negotiate their demands, which can challenge decision-making by prolonging the debates and negotiation outcomes. An interviewee said:

> I would say the smaller Member States often act in groups. So, they look for like-minded allies and form a bloc on a particular, let us say, proposal or a specific issue. Essentially, they try to stick together and make a case for their interest. Furthermore, if they do not like something, we have what we call a blocking minority. So, in the system of what we call Qualified Majority Voting (QMV), they try to get as many countries around one issue as possible so that they have what is called the blocking minorities so that the legislative proposal could not advance against their will (Interview with SS 2021).

Consequently, forming these alliances when voting on issues and interests can influence decision-making more than the population size or economy alone. Nevertheless, the size of a country could sometimes be a factor in determining the amount of power a country possesses at the EU level of decision-making, for instance, Germany or France. In short, policy impacts and decisions may determine where to draw a contested line rather than the

population or size of one's economy. For instance, when Finland abstained from voting on the relocation policy, the policy came into effect since the other Member States voted in favour. As a result, Finland's decision to abstain from voting impacted the policy outcome, suggesting that the outcome might have taken a different dimension if they had voted. According to Wahlbeck (2019b, p. 308), "the EU relocation decision in September 2015 was decided after voting, 20 member states voted yes, 4 voted no (Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary), and Finland was the only member state that abstained from voting". Their decision not to vote on the policy issue was mainly political and not their powerlessness as a small country or otherwise (Interview with AA 2021, Wahlbeck 2019a). The contention is that they could have made a significant difference with their vote.

In a nutshell, diverse Finnish actors are involved in EU-level decision-making, according to an interviewee:

> [Other actors work] in the EU decision-making process, but of course, our staff will prepare our Minister for the meeting regarding [discussing] issues in Brussels. Also, some officials from our outfit in our Minister's delegation might support the Minister of Interior in those meetings […..] ……but it functions pretty well! So, whenever the Ministers go to Brussels meetings and other high-level meetings, they are always prepared, and in many cases, some staff travel with them and support them in the sessions (Interview with IH 2020).

Thus, the decisions made at the supranational level have elements and inputs from the local and national levels as per the MLG concept. Similarly, supranational decisions influence the procedures at the domestic and local levels through regulations and directives. This analysis shows an iterative and cyclical process in a complex, sensitive decision and interactive policymaking process. For instance, an interviewee explained that:

> We [civil servants and other responsible actors] submit the plan to Parliament, which checks for any questions or misunderstandings, and after they decide, it returns to us. Then, when we have negotiations in the Council or the Commission, the working group, and the parties, we follow the lines of the decisions given by Parliament. If something changes, then we have to inform Parliament about it again. Therefore, we follow the instructions of Parliament. Although we come from different ministries, we discuss and write these policy documents together […….]. Nevertheless, we try to find common ground in our actions, but typically, opinions differ. Therefore, if we disagree strongly and cannot proceed, the Ministers and Government resolve it [Shadows of hierarchy in MLG relationship] (Interview with JT 2020).

Also, Finnish law mandates that all government proposals relating to the EU should go through Parliament before implementation (Interview with JT 2020). As observed above, Finland's engagements at the Supranational level also entail decision-making concerning Frontex. Consequently, the relevant Finnish institutions and actors are deeply involved in the decision-making process and implementing such decisions. For instance, the country avails resources for Frontex operations, including participation in the execution of joint deportation orders, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. The following sub-section discusses the nature of regular decision-making at the national level.

4.2.2   Regular Decision-making at the National Level

The routine process of immigration governance can be much slower than during a crisis (Interview with JT 2020). The slowness can make the process expensive and time-consuming because it often includes almost all the institutions and actors involved in the governance of immigration. Examples include some parliamentary committees checking virtually every government proposal, the constitution serving as a yardstick for decision-making, and politicians debating issues thoroughly, which makes regular decision-making much slower than during a crisis or when there is pressure on the system. Compared to the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the difference is that almost all authorities regarded the migration crisis as requiring urgent attention; hence, actions were fast-tracked to ease the impact of the crisis (Interview with PH 2020).

Nevertheless, the different institutions within the MLG make decisions independently or conjointly. The impacts of every decision may cut across all levels. This argument indicates that although the institutions collaborate in making decisions, the authorities still have command strata as in conventional situations, contradicting the MLG concept. Such contradiction does not make the MLG paradigm inapplicable because the MLG relationships are still visible at the national decision-making level. To illustrate this argument, the FIS has more power to decide on asylum applications, residency permits, and other immigration issues (Interview with JL 2020) without consulting other actors (independent). The Police implement the decisions made by the FIS, for example, enforcing return operations usually in conjunction with the FBG after ensuring no hindrances (conjoint). Again, the FBG can also deny or approve the admissions of immigrants into Finland based on the circumstances at the borders; that is, the FBGs can deny an immigrant entry at the border if they are not convinced (independent). As Vanto et al. (2021, p.4) argued, immigration authorities can draw on legal frameworks to influence the outcomes of policies and laws flexibly and instrumentally because they exercise much discretion. They perform these roles regularly

and in emergencies with little or no variations. Therefore, the MLG concept allows an understanding of immigration governance in light of democratic rules and conventional dispensation (Scholten and Penninx 2016). The nature of interaction shows that the Finnish national level actors actively engage in multilevel approaches to immigration governance but with obvious limitations in blurring the lines of authority.

Thus, immigration policy decision-making and implementation in Finland frequently address these issues about immigration governance discussed above based on policies that contain inputs from all the actors within the MLG. One interviewee noted that:

> [Nevertheless], at the same time, we must also remember that in Finland and the EU, legal and illegal migration are issues discussed all the time… So we in Finland try to emphasise the comprehensive approach to migration, so it [includes decision-making and implementation regarding] …legal migration, asylum-seeking, refugees, external political relations…so it is all these (Interview with IK 2020).

Some regular decisions within the MLG relationship focus on crime prevention, including criminal networks such as human trafficking, illegal entry and other cross-border crimes. This argument demonstrates the strength of the MLG concept in representing the technical complexity of a delicate phenomenon such as immigration, although it has its pitfalls. Consequently, solving a problem can happen differently and on diverse levels (Hunt 1997). It can occur on the EU, national or local levels or combinations of the levels. For example, the nature of regular immigration decision-making and implementation processes at the national level in Finland is such that when the Government proposes policies, the institutions concerned come together to find the best possible way to accomplish that (Interview with JT 2020). The actors meet within committees or working groups to deliberate on the issues and present their views and opinions based on their expertise and general knowledge. This argument is consistent with what Arnold et al. (2015 p.i) noted: "civil servants rather than politicians do the detailed designs of policy, manage and monitor their implementation". In applying the MLG concept, this assertion suggests Type I MLG, where tasks are specific.

These plans sometimes require political approvals (Wahlbeck 2019a), although politicians do not have expert knowledge and may not completely understand the problems occasionally; thus, they need additional clarification and time to deliberate and decide (Interview with IH 2020). To get their plans acceptable by politicians to facilitate implementation, civil servants need to be proactive by critically examining the requirements, evidence and limitations before making any suggestions based on which the politicians make their decisions. For instance, recently, the Finnish Government wanted to speed up the

acquisition of residence permits by reducing the processing times to a maximum of one month. This policy change would require modifications to the existing law and systems to accommodate such an enormous and radical change (Interview with JT 2020). Usually, the preparations of such a proposal would require onboarding all stakeholders within specific roles and jurisdictions. Civil servants are the government employees who ensure that the Government's proposals get the approval of Parliament in this relationship because there can be instances where the proposals get rejected when some politicians are sceptical about them.

Finally, as discussed above, as part of the national level decision-making, the national level also has strong incentives to listen to the opinions and proposals of the local level when making immigration decisions, a natural interactiveness indicated by the MLG concept from a constructivist perspective. This contention is because the local level plays a significant role in immigration matters, and avoiding it when designing policies and decisions can lead to policy implementation failures. Such occurrences are why MLG encourages all actors to engage proactively in the relationship (Dolinar 2010). The local level actors express their opinions on issues, forming part of the decisions, although, as discussed above, they make crucial decisions at their level of jurisdiction. These level actors cooperate with almost all the institutions involved in immigration governance at the national level in making decisions. Consequently, Jeffery and Peterson (2020, p.756) argued that "European governments became pragmatic because delegating their powers to the EU and sub-national actors enabled them to achieve sustainable policy goals".

4.3   Summary

This chapter has drawn on data from interviews conducted as part of this PhD thesis to evaluate the nature, pattern and practicality of the MLG interaction and relationship, which is iterative and complex in institutional decision-making and implementation. These interactions indicate ongoing exchanges and negotiations at each level, horizontally or vertically across all levels. For instance, the local level interacts vertically, mainly with the national level and horizontally with other local levels, but indirectly and occasionally directly with the supranational level. As Dolinar (2010, p.99) noted, discussing MLG as a total system involves recognising both the vertical and horizontal components. The national level is the main level within the MLG, with the competence to serve as a bridge between the sub-national and supranational levels, particularly on issues of immigration. It also has institutions interacting horizontally and vertically while simultaneously devolving some power to the local level and participating in governance beyond the national level at the

supranational level. Such complex and dynamic arrangements are what the MLG concept helps to clarify.

Therefore, the supranational level mainly provides directives on significant policy issues and concerns and also influences decisions at the national level with its membership rules and regulations. Overall, it is a very complex and dynamic process, but this PhD study argues that the complexities do not always impede the agreements and final policy outcomes. MLG also portrays the relationships involved within and beyond the various levels. This chapter shows that the complexity is more lop-sided at the supranational level, where different national actors become engaged in negotiating national positions and interests. However, the New EU Pact introduced recently by the Member States aims to:

> Provide a comprehensive approach that brings together policy in the areas of migration, asylum, integration and border management. It acknowledges that the overall migration governance depends on the progress made on all fronts (European Commission 2020, p.2).

The nature of the complexity at the national level (Finland) is relatively flexible, mainly due to familiarity and shared national interests, which influence the dynamics. Interactions at the national level and between the national and local levels are much more straightforward than what happens beyond the national level in the MLG framework.

The next chapter builds on the current, responding to research question two detailing the power-sharing arrangements that are involved when the national level connects to the EU level.

CHAPTER 5 MULTILEVEL IMPLEMENTATION OF IMMIGRATION POLICIES IN FINLAND AND THE EU

5.0   Introduction

This chapter analyses research question two: How do Finland's immigration management institutions establish and maintain connections with the European Union in the consistent implementation of immigration policies, both in regular circumstances and during crisis situations? The goal here is to understand the nature and mechanisms of interaction between different levels of authorities responsible for making and implementing immigration policies in Finland and the EU. Panizzon and van Riemsdijk (2019, p.1226) argued that the MLG concept depicts an array of complex power-sharing arrangements, ranging from relationships of co-existence, cooperation, and conflicting powers to venue-shopping. However, Blank (2009) claimed that research has shown various economic activities are executed without coordination between the different levels of government, whereby each level of actors tries to pursue their own goals. Therefore, the chapter unpacks how the Finnish authorities co-exist and cooperate regarding whether there are opposing powers or venue-shopping in implementing refugee and asylum-seeking policies when they interrelate with the EU. This chapter has four sections to answer the research question. It begins with how the actors attain collaboration, namely how MLG collaboration in Finland facilitates cooperation with the EU. The following subsection will examine how a smaller Member State, in terms of population, such as Finland, can have a say in policy implementation in the EU and how the EU achieves consensus in that regard. There will then be a demonstration of how the MLG competencies are adopted during policy implementation within this MLG setting. Competence in this study refers to which authority is mandated to make decisions or implement them at a particular level or across the levels. It depicts the limits to the power of each institution within this MLG framework.

As stated in the previous chapter, social constructivism theory and MLG concept will facilitate the interpretations of the dynamics at play between the local, national and EU level institutions implementing immigration policies. Daniell and Kay (2017, p.11) argued that the MLG concept could be used in three main ways:

- ➢ analytically [to understand decision-making and policy processes better];
- ➢ empirically, as in the case of many MLG studies in the EU, and;
- ➢ normatively to offer potential improvements to governance arrangements.

This research favours more of the second and third paradigms of using MLG empirically to study MLG arrangements, patterns and nature in Finland and the EU while offering potential improvements to governance arrangements in implementing refugees and asylum-seeking policies when necessary from a constructivist perspective. Social constructivism blends effectively with the MLG concept in explaining empirical research, as argued in Chapter 3 (Smith 1999). Blending social constructivism with the MLG concept provides a robust framework for understanding and clarifying the complexities of governance in empirical research. This integration supports researchers in capturing the nuanced and dynamic nature of governance practices, emphasising how social interactions and contexts shape policy and decision-making processes. Associating with this second and third usage of the MLG relationship, as contended by Daniell and Kay (2017), implies that there is a dynamic relationship between Finland and the EU because, firstly, Finland is a Member State of the EU and therefore bound by the EU's regulations and transposes the EU's directives into its national laws for implementation. To illustrate this point better, Finland is connected to, and bound by, the Common European and Asylum System (CEAS) and migration regulations as an EU Member State. The CEAS is an EU regulation regarding asylum-seeking across all the Member States, which binds them. Hence, in implementing this common policy, the Member States must follow its contents no matter the level of implementation within the MLG framework. Simultaneously, Finland has national policies and laws (the Aliens Act) governing the immigration of asylum-seekers and refugees (Interviews with SS and SN 2021), which include transposed directives from the EU level. For instance, the OECD's (2010, p.117) report argued that an increasing proportion of Finnish laws (up to 80 per cent in some policy areas) are EU directives. Mutual immigration policies between the EU and Finland are thus vital issues in the governance of immigration within Finland and the EU in the MLG relationship. Secondly, the EU relates to Finland in a top-down and bottom-up vertical connection (with special arrangements in place) due to the circumstances described above (OECD 2010). Therefore, the analysis in this chapter examines arguments regarding the dynamism and complexities involved in implementing immigration policies on a multilevel basis

5.1   Collaborative Policy Implementation

Regarding cooperation, it is essential to remember that Finland has a consensus-driven culture whereby engaging authorities, especially those interviewed for this research, in collaborative efforts is a norm (Interview with HN 2020). The constructivism theory underscores the emergence of such governance practices in Finland, resulting from individuals acting upon the beliefs they develop within the context of specific traditions and

discourses (Bevir 2009; Grant 2018). This analysis suggests that constructivism views governance practices as products of individual actions and the underlying beliefs that are cultivated within specific cultural and linguistic contexts. This perspective aligns with the idea that social and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping MLG structures and practices (Búzás 2006). Therefore, as shown in Figure 4[6] below, the national level institutions collaborate horizontally within the multilevel framework. This collaboration means that the horizontal-level actors interact as cohorts within the MLG framework. They do not receive direct commands from each other but can, for example, request assistance in implementing necessary policies. To clarify this further, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland can jointly establish a committee to educate immigrant women who have sought asylum and received their residence permits but have yet to get into work. Social constructivism emphasises that such collective, discursive, and social practices define the identity of actors and the normative order within which they make their moves in governing immigration (Maslow and Nakamura 2008; Paster 2005).

Rainio-Niemi (2015, p.27) argued that "in the Nordic context, a thought-shared notion of belonging facilitates compromise and mutual agreement in place of zero-sum games and a winner-take-all attitude". This notion of common good thus supports the nature and norm of MLG interactions within Finland. That is, managers in charge of these agencies and institutions involved in this research can quickly contact each other for collaboration and get their approval (Interviews with RK, TK, IH, HN and JT 2020). This contention does not neglect the potential for disruptions or refusals by other institutions to collaborate if they are not interested or do not have the resources available. Instead, this observation underscores the facilitation of collaboration at the horizontal level in Finland, owing to the consensus-driven attitude and joint efforts ingrained in the mindset of the authorities (Interviews with HN and FL 2020). According to constructivist theory, institutions are not static entities bestowed upon actors; instead, they dynamically evolve through the interpretation and engagement of these actors. A central component of institutional dynamics is norms, characterised as standards governing appropriate behaviour. Notably, these norms exhibit a dual nature, shaping the actions of actors while simultaneously being actively constructed by them (Oh and Matsuoka 2017).

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[6] Figure 5 shows the multilevel interactions between the various immigration governance actors engaged in this research. The researcher designed this figure to map the linkages pictorially

Figure 4 MLG institutions studied

MGL INSTITUTIONS INTERACTION ON IMMIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN THE STUDY

European Commission
- Lead EU decisions and policymaking by proposing new legislation to the Council and the European Parliament.
- Serves as a custodian, enforces EU laws and treaties with the European Court of Justice (ECJ).
- Acts as an international negotiator and spokesperson.
- Engages externally with international actors and internally with EU and national level actors.
- Draft the regulations that the European Council and the European Parliament approve.

European Council
- Coreper's unresolved issues, which the Council of Ministers cannot solve, are mainly settled by the European Council.
- Held accountable for many decisions and policies at the EU level; hence their involvement in policymaking at that level to provide the necessary inputs that will contribute to reliable and robust policies.

Finnish Permanent Representation
- It contributes to the drafting of decisions to be submitted to the Council of the European Union.
- Close cooperation with the capital ensures an efficient distribution of tasks between the Permanent Representation and the government ministries.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- EU cooperation, bilateral relations with the countries of origin and transit.
- Cooperation and influencing policies in international organizations, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, mediation and support for dialogues, human rights, crisis management and security policy, trade and development policy and consular services.
- Supervises a working group charged with migration-related issues.
- Collaborates with the Police and Border Guards in the issuance of visas.

Finnish Police
- Team up with the Border Guards to carry out deportation orders after the Finnish Immigration Service has denied permit applications.
- Enforces the returns of rejected applicants.
- Responsible for operations concerning the Schengen area.
- Carry out migration control duties within the country with other authorities like the Customs Officials, Tax authorities.

Finnish Parliament
- Parliament enacts all legislation in Finland, approves the budget and ratifies international treaties.
- Plays a strong role in decision-making on EU matters.
- Decides what position Finland should take in EU decision-making on the matters that fall with the Parliament's competence.

Finnish Immigration Service
- Makes decisions regarding residence permits and asylum applications.
- Grants or rejects citizenship and declaration applications, refugees' issues and maintains the reception system.
- Offers professional intelligence and information for political decision-making.
- Receives and registers EU citizens' applications, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, exercising their right to residency in the Member States.

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
- It stimulates employment opportunities among immigrants and oversees the drafting of integration legislation.
- Improve the labour market skills of immigrants already living in Finland.
- Helps with the integration of migrants into the Finnish Society.

Ministry of Education and Culture
- Facilitates education and training programmes for immigrants at various levels of education.
- Oversees immigration issues, including culture, sport, youth work, and religion.

Finnish Border Guards
- Control Finland's land, water, and air borders.
- Border Guards oversee the deportation of TCNs.
- They receive asylum applications; establish their identity and routes travelled before submitting them to the Finnish Immigration Service.
- Are the final point of entry and exit into the country.

Ministry of Interior
- Overseeing immigration affairs.
- Guides the Finnish Immigration Service on implementation issues.
- Assists in developing legislation.
- Provides the leading role in organising the other institutions involved in managing immigration.

Ministry of Justice
- Gives guidance on making laws governing immigration, immigration management, and enforcing decisions on immigrants.
- Can overturn the decisions made by the FIS from negative to positive.

Municipalities of Finland (City of Helsinki)
- Education and skill training of immigrants
- Provide essential services for permanent residence immigrants.
- Decide whether to receive quota refugees and asylum seekers granted residence permits.
- Provides advisory services and helps with the integration process of asylum seekers and people in a similar situation.

Finnish Red Cross
- Work closely with the Finnish Immigration Service to help refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of irregular migration.
- Operate various refugee camps.

Source: Author's Construct (2023)

Cooperation at the national level can also take the form of a simple phone call, establishing working groups that meet regularly or for an emergency, and a formal written request for collaboration in both the horizontal and vertical levels of the MLG. Such arrangements also typically depend on the issue at hand and the formality required to cooperate. This actor-centred constructivist perspective potentially offers an in-depth examination of the genesis and operational dynamics of cooperation within distinct political contexts (Vlassis 2022). That is, it provides a valuable framework for conducting detailed analyses of cooperation in international relations and governance, focusing on the roles of individual actors, the origins of cooperation, the operational dynamics involved, and the influence of different political contexts. For instance, during the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the MoI established a crisis management group to maintain situational awareness of migration and to agree on change-related measures and leadership arrangements in exceptional situations. That group comprised the MoI, FIS, the National Police Board, the FBG, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (FSIS) and the MoFA (EMN 2017 p.10). This example illustrates how MLG interaction advanced the implementation of an immigration policy in Finland. As Kooiman (2003) argued, no single actor has the necessary authority or tools to cover all aspects of governance, hence, the essence of interactive implementation of policies. Thus, the authorities involved in the established crisis management group engaged and cooperated closely to solve the issues that confronted them. This cooperation means that bureaucracy may undermine individual efforts where this level of collaboration is absent within the MLG framework. The group's networking helped them work together, facilitating their work toward a common goal.

Also, coordinating implementation by national level authorities in such interactions contributes to facilitating the process (Interview with TK 2020) because Finland is a small country in terms of population, of about 5.5 million (Official Statistics Finland 2021). This claim regarding coordination implies that it is a crucial feature of MLG transactions. Although the idea of MLG is that there is almost no coordination (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006), this research finds that the coordination element is still relevant for MLG functionality. This argument is because the different layers still maintain some level of authority as prevails in a hierarchical approach. According to Faberi (2018), coordinating actions between levels of governance is a good way to increase the effectiveness of the measures adopted. Therefore, one should not assume that coordination is lacking once the Finnish institutions are involved in cooperation; instead, the national level authorities still coordinate activities in a manner that depicts a top-down approach to MLG interaction. This argument is consistent with Ponzo's (2017, p.2) assertion that:

> Multilevel governance is conceptualised as policymaking through non-hierarchical negotiation among actors belonging to various governmental levels where the degree of coordination is not taken for granted. Conflict might be an option alongside collaboration, and policy inconsistency and contradictory measures on 'migrants' rights and integration are regarded as possible outcomes. This perspective considers how migration policies concretely unfold at the intersection of multilevel governance's vertical and horizontal dimensions frames and logic of action at different levels of government.

This argument provides a clear picture of an MLG in its perfect setting, where lines of control are obscure. However, this aspect of no coordination may be observable at the EU and horizontal levels in the Member States, where the particular Member State's authorities can act on equal terms. Although this looks like a significant criticism of MLG interaction, the contention here is that the practical application of the MLG pattern is far from ideal (Ponzo 2017). That is, although the Member States surrender aspects of their national authority or power to the EU, it is essential to know that what happens there is governance beyond the national level and not above it (Ambrosini 2018). Servent (2011) highlighted that the preferences of the Member States are formed at the national level and then uploaded to the EU level, which emphasises the importance of understanding the dynamics between individual member states and the overarching EU governance structure. EU governance, thus, involves the mechanisms and standards that shape decision-making and power dynamics within the European Union, with a focus on transparency, public involvement, responsibility, efficiency, and consistency. A significant portion of their objectives can primarily be attained through working together, a task that, without collaboration, would have been exceedingly challenging (Búzás 2006). As explained in Chapter 3, the essence of MLG practicality supports the idea that diverse institutions on different levels can achieve goals together (Mancheva et al. 2023).

The clustering of Finnish immigration governance authorities performing similar activities facilitates collaboration and cooperation. This relationship differs on the EU stage, where clustering institutions within the Schuman area do not imply the facilitation of collaboration. One of the national level respondents, expressed pride in the nature of cooperation, claiming that it enables the authorities to access the decisions of others easily:

> When it comes to cooperation with other authorities in Finland, we are proud of that! As I wrote in the paper I sent you, we have a standard immigration register. Yes! In Finland, we use it. We call it 'Ulkomaliset Rekisterri' in Finnish. I have heard that there is no similar system in other European countries. About a year ago, I met colleagues from different European Union countries and spoke for about 10

This claim indicates that accessing information about immigration matters to implement them is comparatively more manageable for the Finnish authorities. Such a system can, for instance, facilitate deportation and eliminate irrelevant bureaucratic procedures that usually inhibit such activities. This illustration demonstrates the level of trust among the Finnish authorities within the MLG setting. It indicates that within the MLG relationship, access to information or the ease by which leaders can grant access to information is crucial, and trust facilitates such a process. Simultaneously, it also exemplifies that clustered authorities performing similar activities can reduce the friction involved within MLG interaction. This specific example is also a way of indirectly and informally promoting and propagating national and local systems in one EU nation to other Member States. Another respondent gave an excellent example of a cluster of authorities supporting collaboration within Finland's MLG network. The interviewee said:

> In 2017, we set up a service point for international newcomers named "International House Helsinki". That is a service point operated jointly by the cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, the Finnish Tax Administration, the Social Institution of Finland (KELA), the Finnish Immigration Service, and the Office of Employment and Economic Development. The Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce, the Finnish Centre for Pensions, and the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) are also involved. So, that is a service point where the City of Helsinki coordinates the operations. House Help Helsinki provides a wide range of information and public authority services under one roof for international newcomers in the Helsinki capital region. Furthermore, it offers free advisory and counselling services to employers and companies, for instance, on issues relating to international workers. So, that is one of the concrete ways we cooperate with seven different public service providers and other stakeholders (Interview with FL 2020).

This policy of bringing together all organisations under one roof promotes easy accessibility for service users in one setting. However, its management may present MLG challenges regarding proper coordination. Therefore, its productivity will depend on its constant functionality, devoid of bureaucratic interruptions. All the actors involved need to provide faster and more reliable service for such collaboration to function progressively. The relevance of this analysis to the MLG concept is that coordination within the MLG relationship can also take a bottom-up approach, as depicted in Figure 4 above. It implies that the bottom (local) level can initiate projects and programmes within the MLG

framework and get the support of the national level, for instance. In conflicting interests, the local level may decouple to implement their interest. However, in this complex MLG setting, not all institutions can decouple as they are administrative branches of higher authorities operating at a lower level.

From the points elaborated thus far, cooperation, collaboration and operational coordination are relevant for implementing immigration policies in Finland. For example, Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's government, during the migration crisis in 2015, concentrated on facilitating the asylum-seeking process through closer cooperation among the different ministries and administrative authorities (Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior 2018). Such a system was practical because all the operational actors engaged in cooperative interactions, enabling the country to have a good capacity to govern immigration. That is, while the supranational level had issues deciding on the way forward regarding implementing policies in the Member States (for instance, the relocation policy in 2015), the national level institutions cooperated to find solutions. The analogy suggests that complexity and dynamism are common features of EU-Member State interaction.

Therefore, the research findings imply that Finland manages immigration policy implementation through its society's cooperative and consensus-driven nature, which facilitates decision-making and operations. Relying on each other within such a complex and dynamic MLG system demands that all actors jointly locate common grounds to respond to problems and create opportunities that serve their societies' interests (Torfing et al. 2012). The transformation of prevailing norms, customs, and generally accepted patterns of behaviour is generating dynamism, leading to emerging challenges for traditional frameworks in society, politics, the economy, and culture (Klinke 2017). In essence, the idea is that as societal norms shift, they introduce a dynamic force that can disrupt or pose challenges to the existing structures and systems in place. Constructivism emphasises that this disruption can lead to a need for adaptation and innovation in response to the evolving landscape of social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics, a typical example of which is the MLG interactions ongoing in immigration governance in Finland and the EU. In support of this argument, a respondent stated that:

> Cooperation between the authorities in Finland is accessible without any significant boundaries in their work. Even if independent leaders work in the same field, we can work together and in good cooperation. That is unclear in many countries because I know well inside Europe and beyond, and I have seen how it goes there. It might be because we are a small country. It is easier to understand our

counterparts than in larger countries where no one knows each other that well (Interview with IH 2020).

In relation to the preceding arguments, the homogenous nature of Finland's population makes it easier for interactions to occur (Interview with HN 2020). As a result, Finns trust themselves and find it simple to work with each other. These attributes contribute to why the interviewees think cooperation is more manageable within the Finnish context, which is a significant characteristic of the social constructivism theory. From a constructivist perspective, an individual establishes a mutually constitutive connection within a political framework. The individual interprets the structure, shaping their identity, which influences their inclination towards either supporting the existing structure or advocating for change. This activity, in turn, guides the individual's approach to taking specific actions (Oh and Matsuoka 2017) in governing immigration.

5.1.1 Challenges of collaboration in immigration governance

Notwithstanding the positives of collaboration, the attainment of goals through joint efforts is not always straightforward. For example, an interviewee expressed a contrary view to all the others, which was quite fascinating. The interviewee noted that traditionally, Finnish institutions have not cooperated well (Interview with FL 2020). On behalf of their institution, this point of view is that they feel there have been difficulties in cooperating in implementing policies together with other institutions. However, they believe that such situations have improved over the years. The respondents' lower levels of operation within the MLG framework could be a contributing factor[7]. This analysis implies that some level of difficulty is embedded within the MLG framework for local (lower) level institutions to operate freely. This idea could explain why some institutions decouple from the MLG relationship in the long term. It is also interesting that they have taken a contrary view on cooperation among the authorities. This opinion also inspires controversy because the competencies in immigration governance tend to concentrate mainly at the national level (Interview with TK 2020). This claim was evident, for instance, during Europe's 2015-2016 migration crisis, where "municipalities in Finland, Latvia and Malta had no voice regarding where reception centres should be situated" (EMN 2018, p.28). The national level authorities were unwilling to shift immigration decisions and implementation downwards to the local and regional

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[7] For instance, the European Committee of the Regions (2019, p.9) noted that the role of local and regional authorities needs to be significantly upgraded within the legislative cycle. This can be achieved through more developed political dialogue between co-legislators and the institutions representing local and regional authorities as well as by improving access to information.

levels, who were ready to help during the crisis. This argument will be elaborated further in Chapter 6 regarding the discussions on the case study of the 2015-2016 crisis. However, in support of this claim, Terrón and Pinyol (2018, p.4) claimed that:

> Central governments were reluctant to transfer competencies to regional and local authorities. This tension was evident during the so-called refugee crisis that started in 2015, in which local and regional authorities seemed willing to help and accommodate more asylum-seekers and refugees than national governments, although they do not have competencies in providing international protection.

Thus, concentrating immigration governance competencies at only the national level within the MLG relationship devalues the essence of the framework and aligns better with federalism (Blank 2009), which could lead to power grabs, conflicting situations and misunderstandings (Torfing et al. 2012). However, Scholten (2012) argues that not all multi-level governance settings presuppose interaction and coordination on a multilevel, implying that the conditions under which MLG takes place are needed.

Torfing et al. (2012) contend that partnerships enable governments to encourage positive elements of different activities, but that is not without limitations. For instance, some challenges can be so complicated that involving different relevant actors only heightens the deadlock where every actor is waiting for the other to be the first to concede defeat or initiate an action. In such instances, the shadow of hierarchy (Jessop 2013) emerges to offer a solution to the deadlock. Thus, although Finnish institutions may have attained many goals through partnerships, implementing similar policies at the EU level can become problematic because of the extra layer of actors beyond the national level. This example suggests that a structural system, such as solidarity and burden-sharing, will be a proactive approach to dealing with complex situations when dependence on nationalism and homogeneity is absent. Constructivists argue that the presence of States within a self-help system is a result of the prevailing practices, asserting that altering these practices will subsequently modify the intersubjective knowledge that forms the foundation of the system (Maslow and Nakamura 2008). In other words, by changing how States behave and interact, it is possible to alter the shared understandings and norms, potentially moving away from a self-help system towards a more cooperative or collaborative one. That is, social constructivism stresses that when a group of actors interact robustly, thinking and questing for knowledge facilitate meaning-making towards reality in immigration decision-making and implementation (Omodan and Tsotetsi 2020). It follows that reality is socially constructed, which suggests that our perception of reality is shaped by social factors, indicating that

governance can be understood objectively but should not be treated as a concrete, unquestionable entity (Búzás 2006). Ultimately, the positives of collaboration outweigh the negative aspects as this stimulates public innovation, the democratisation of community decision-making and effective governance (Torfing et al. 2012).

This statement indicates that there are sometimes compromises in making and implementing policy decisions. For instance, a respondent explained that:

> Well! In Finland, in general, I think there is something like a firewall between politicians and civil servants. Politicians should not meddle with the work of civil servants. To some extent, it becomes an issue in immigration matters, which are on the practical level in Finland, decided by Migri, the immigration authority. So we politicians define the laws, write them, and change them, but Migri implements them (Interview with AA 2021).

Such a statement reveals that the various authorities within the MLG relationship have some friction between them when executing their roles. Politicians and civil servants, for example, have different interests, leading to such conflicts. In such situations, the politicians have made the law but cannot drive decisions for the implementing institutions. MLG relationships with restrictions can, therefore, be challenging to handle, especially when seeking a unanimous position. The claim above indicates that in the governance of migration, when politicians develop and negotiate migration policies without involving all the stakeholders in a multilevel approach, the results can be disastrous. For example, in the situation above, it is essential to answer the crucial issue of how lawmakers/politicians ensure that "Migri" implements and interprets the laws and policies according to their true meaning and relevance. This appraisal indicates that politicians must involve Migri in policymaking by listening to their voices and considering their perceptions and ideologies to facilitate implementation. This assertion suggests that an MLG relationship, where all actors cooperate meaningfully, can promote implementation at the national and EU levels. According to Caponio and Jone-Correa (2018, p.1997), "the EU and global institutions adopt MLG concept as a yardstick of good practices in policy formulation and implementation".

The nature of horizontal interactions at the EU-level institutions is, however, still immersed in diverse national perspectives and stances presented by the Member States during decision-making, which impact policy implementation (Interview with SS and SN 2021). Implementing policy decisions negotiated at the EU level is complicated, especially when negotiations on common issues arise (Interviews with SS and SN 2021; and IH 2020) since

the EU depends on the Member States to execute its decisions (Dolinar 2010). For example, during the 2015-2016 crisis (analysed later in Chapter 6), the EU Member States agreed to relocate 160,000 asylum-seekers from Hungary, Greece and Italy to the other Member States. Implementation problems became complex and led to the failure of this policy (Geddes and Scholten 2016). This example does not imply that policy implementation is always a smooth process at the national and local levels and only complex at the supranational level. Policies and resolutions can also be complicated at the national and local levels because they were formulated at the EU level.

Agreeing on policies, especially at the EU level when the required structures are not already in place, can be intricate, making their implementation later very challenging. For instance, because there is a Schengen arrangement on standard visa policy, it is "easier to implement" it because the standard is the same across all the Member States (Interview with TK 2020). However, when implementing labour migration policies like the EU Blue Card Directive (Interview with SS 2021), Member States transpose it to suit their national interests. This analogy indicates that directives are not standardised units of measurement across the Member States, unlike the standard regulations, which are the same for all the Member States. As Dolinar (2010, p.99) argued, at the EU level, the MLG relationship emerged from the expectation that better legislative procedures would be reached through stronger cooperation among the actors to facilitate their implementation. However, Niemann and Zaun (2018) opined that, despite the limited incentives for collaboration at the EU level, the presence of functional and normative pressures emanating from Schengen, coupled with a sustained commitment to cooperation, engenders a prospect for the cultivation of meaningful collaborative efforts at that level. This suggests that despite the challenges, the combination of pressures from Schengen and a commitment to cooperation is an avenue for meaningful collaboration within the EU. Such obligations are driven by various factors, such as shared interests, historical ties, or institutional norms, which align with the constructivist interpretations of cooperation. "Functional pressures refer to the practical considerations or benefits, while the "normative" pressures refer to shared values or norms that encourage cooperation. It suggests that there may not be strong motivations or rewards for Member States to work together on certain issues.

5.2   Smallness on the Bigger Stage- Why it Matters

An essential goal of this research is to examine how a small Member State of the EU influences policy decisions and implementation strategies at the EU level. This section

centres on how Finland, a small Member State (as described above), can affect the EU's decisions and how implementation strategies and decisions made at the EU level affect the policies implemented at the national level. As already described, smallness refers to the size of the population and, to some extent, the economic strength. To an extent, Finland can be considered a small Member State of the EU, according to the definition above. At the other end of the spectrum, Finland can be regarded as a country with considerable say within the EU per capita. In support of this claim, a respondent opined that:

> No! We do not have the same influence as the big countries. Still, I think per capita wise, we do have a bit more say, of course, some of the decisions have to be made to […] favour all, and so as one member country, even though we are small, we have a bit more influence. [Nevertheless], the more prominent countries have more power, and that is a snatch! I mean, they are bigger countries, so it makes sense. I think because they are bigger, their voices are mainly heard. So, they, of course, have more significance in the Union, but I think it is natural! I mean that there are more Germans than Finns in the common Union; of course, it would be wrong for the Germans if one Finn had more influence, that is, if our vote were more vocal than for the big countries. Still, I would say that we have enough power and […] our stances matter (Interview with JA 2021).

From the assertion above, the assumption that a small country has a minor bargaining power on a bigger stage like the EU seems factual, as confessed by the respondent above. This claim implies that influencing decisions and implementation strategies at the supranational level within the MLG framework is associated with factors such as numbers and the per capita size of one's economy. However, there are many other vital factors, for instance, the negotiation skills of the actors, but that is not the rationale here. This research did not measure or compare the per capita income of all the Member States to arrive at this conclusion. Hence, this explanation is not a justification but instead a probable reason. In many instances, however, it has led countries who feel their bargaining power is lesser to form alliances on issues they think they cannot influence or block. Finland has usually formed such partnerships with the Nordic Member States (Interview with SS 2021) or other states, depending on the issues and their stance. For example, the Finnish Government (2021, p.9) stated, "Finland will promote Nordic cooperation in the EU", which supports the claim of alliance formations at the EU level regarding regional interests.

Smaller Member States "pay attention to presenting unitary and cohesive national positions at the EU level. For instance, presenting homogeneous positions within the Council negotiations is regarded as effective tools" (Raunio and Wilberg 2001, p.62). This contention is because the EU has, since its "beginning", increased in "heterogeneity" (Dolinar 2010,

p.98). Hence, as a small Member State, Finland tends to emphasise the role of international law and agreements in formulating global policies, including asylum policies (Wahlbeck 2019a, p. 300), to influence decisions and implementation strategies. Finland again tends to be constructive and flexible on the EU stage, principally to affect decisions as a smaller Member State. For example, an interviewee emphasised that:

> One way to describe it is that we usually favour conventional solutions and a strong Commission as a small Member State. So you could say that a strong Commission is [suitable] for a small Member State. Perhaps from this, [I would say] we can be pretty supportive of the Commission's proposals, constructive and flexible because of the small size of our country (Interview with VK 2022).

According to the Finnish Government (2021, p.9):

> It is only by constructively participating in all cooperation and debate on the EU's development that we can make our voices heard, have our views given weight, and pursue our own goals and interests, as well as influence the future of the EU.

Per the claims above, smaller EU Member States within the MLG network tend to favour joint decisions and implementation strategies at the EU level (Raunio and Wilberg 2001). They believe that collective approaches are practical ways of attaining their goals rather than going solo (European Commission 2015; King and Lulle 2016). This assertion supports the arguments by Kooiman (2003) and Torfing et al. (2012) that taking a solo approach is a less efficient way of advancing interactiveness. Finland already considers itself a small Member State with "fewer resources" and prefers joint efforts to solutions at the EU level (Interview with HN 2020). Finland acknowledges that by presenting a common approach, they will represent a formidable force in solving immigration issues rather than as a small Member State. A caution here is that the definition of smallness can be relative and interpreted differently in diverse contexts.

5.3   Components of Policy Implementation in Finland and the EU

Different immigration policy implementation issues and strategies are designed and carried out by various institutions at different levels of the MLG framework based on their competencies (Interview with SS 2021). For instance, the EU recently proposed a new Act on Migration in response to the implementation failure of its European Agenda on Migration of 2015. This new Act seeks a "consensual commitment on common principles for the governance of migration and asylum in Europe" (De Wenden 2021, p.1). To finalise this

new Act, which is under negotiation at the EU level, Finland prepared its stance (Interviews with JT 2020; SK and VS 2022) as usual through the involvement of the Finnish Parliament in all EU matters. This way, its stances are thoroughly deliberated and debated before being presented at the EU level. Notwithstanding these connections with the EU, the Member States still favour their domestic rules on immigration, especially those areas with national redlines, which they are reluctant to transfer to the EU. There are also areas where the EU level is barely involved. For instance, as discussed previously in Chapters 1 and 4, the Member States are unwilling to give up control of labour migration to the EU level, and immigrants' integration is another area where the EU is barely involved.

Despite these, Finnish regulations on immigration still conform. The EU's rules are binding regulations, in which case the EU has the competence. In the case of EU directives, Finnish laws draw inspiration through transposition. An interviewee noted that:

> Of course, the Member States want to keep their legislation as, let us say, stable as possible. […..]but then we in the European Commission [……] have a different overview because we usually can see all national legislations and their benefits, thus the advantages and the disadvantages that national legislations have (Interview with SS 2021).

The assertion above suggests that within the MLG framework, the national levels shift some aspects of their power to the EU level, where they seek standard solutions to European immigration problems. However, although they aim to seek common grounds, finding these grounds can become challenging because of the various conflicting interests they onboard. As explained in Chapter 2, these contradictory interests indicate that the Member States can become reluctant to transfer power to the EU level on specific issues. Therefore, depending on the problems to be resolved, competency determines which governance level addresses them (could also take a multilevel approach in which specific actors from different levels are mandated). Such instances defeat the relevance of the MLG relationship because the lines of authority are not blurred as should have been the case in the MLG framework. Thus, comparing Finland's and the EU's immigration policies, it was evident that competencies play significant roles in determining whether the national (including the local level) or the EU level should resolve the issue at hand. When the problem involves resolution at the EU's level, Finland, like any other Member State, must act under the EU's mandates and policies, although they may be reluctant. If it is at the national level, Finland works according to the national laws (which include transposed EU directives). There is only a thin line between the EU's directives and Member States' laws (Interviews with JT, RK, FL and LK 2020; SS

2021). Koivukangas' (2003, p.7) contention that "the focus of Finnish immigration policies is primarily on national interests with elements of EU's framework due to its EU membership" highlights this assertion.

However, most of these competencies still fall directly under the competencies of the Member State, which are subject to national and not the EU's legislation (Interview with SS 2021). According to the Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior (2018, p.90), the EU's Treaty, readmission agreements, and associated negotiations fall under the EU's competence. For instance, the EU has about eighteen valid readmission agreements with third countries. Out of these, readmission between the EU and Russia is the most crucial to Finland since Finland shares a common border with Russia, and Russians account for the second-highest number of immigrants in Finland. Hence, Finland places such relevance on the readmission agreement between the EU and Russia, which also explains why Finland is of interest in this research and critical to defining immigration policy implementation between Finland and the EU. However, the domestic rules of the Member States must conform to the EU's, per the directive, but controversies surrounding the Member States' sovereignty emerge during the transposition and implementation phase, as demonstrated by the recent Poland and the EU scuffle. Carmel (2014) argued that not all EU directives are binding on all Member States because there are opt-ins and opt-outs for some Member States. For instance, there are opt-outs for Denmark and Ireland, which they can use in different combinations. Daniell and Kay (2017, p.11), however, argued that:

> Compliance is an outcome of negotiations and the ability of different actors at different levels to exert influence within those negotiations and hold others within them accountable for their actions over a specific period.

This argument means that the actors must be active and engaged to influence the process within the MLG framework.

Hence, policy implementation should consider all activities within the MLG relationship and not limit them to a particular level. This claim also indicates that negotiating and holding others accountable for their actions and inactions within the network can facilitate policy implementation outcomes. MLG relationship promotes an understanding of the potential for hybridity in novel governance arrangements (Daniell and Kay 2017). For example, an interviewee noted that:

[In creating our] position on the EU affairs, it is stated in our constitution [….]. So, we have to inform Parliament, [and] also [….] ask their opinion. Moreover, whenever it relates to legislation, of course, EU legislation becomes part of Finnish legislation, and Parliament has legislative power. So we have no option on that; we must ask [……] what position they have. Of course, the government prepares the works, and then Parliament debates and hopefully proposes that position, and we come here (EU level) with that position. That is what we must say in the meetings and negotiations (Interview with SK 2022).

This statement demonstrates a practical MLG competence hybridity in the Finnish-EU context, which does not strictly follow a specific form of the two types of MLG espoused by Hooghe and Marks (2001), discussed in Chapter 3. These competencies in implementing policies lead to complexities and dynamism, elaborated in the next section.

5.4 MLG's Complexities and Dynamism in Implementing Immigration Policies.

A significant feature of the MLG conceptual framework is the ambiguity underlining the nature and patterns of interactions among the nested actors at different levels (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006). Constructivists, however, highlight that social interactions among these actors can lead to the established structures within the MLG relationship (Christiansen et al. 1999). In most cases, this blurriness of the actors' authority can lead to complex and dynamic relationships in negotiating and implementing policies. The nature of the framework adopted by Finland in dealing with the EU in implementing refugee and asylum-seekers policy on a multilevel has been analysed, as seen in the previous chapter. As argued by Búzás (2006, p.47), a precondition for adopting a constructivist stance involves carefully selecting "Units" and "levels" of analysis, or "agents" and the corresponding "structure" within which they operate. Throughout this discussion, various pieces of evidence show that the complexity gets more pronounced and dynamic as the level of governance increases, resulting in the ambiguity of the "chains of accountability" (Ekelund 2014, p.99). According to the Finnish Government (2021, p.8), "the EU's operating environment has become increasingly complicated. We can discern power politics of great powers questioning the multilevel rules-based system and the rise of nationalism". This contention highlights the issues of complexity and the bargaining powers of smaller Member States, as discussed above. Yet, conventional approaches such as bureaucratic negotiations lack institutional structures and procedures that can adequately address problems of dynamism and complexity. Constructivists contend that specific processes and structures of actor constellations like MLG arrangements can offer explanations for the complex and dynamic relationships in immigration governance (Klinke 2017).

The preceding arguments indicate the complicated nature of negotiations within the MLG framework and how they affect the implementation outcomes. Thus, in making policies and decisions, attention must be paid to the "dynamics of power that might lead to asymmetrical configurations and party politics which can produce different outcomes" (Ponzo 2017, p.2). When it gets more intricate, and there are fewer decision outcomes or unanimity, the EU Member States resort to alliances. For instance, a Finnish representative from the EU level explained how complex the negotiation process could be. She stated that:

> [With] regards [to] the pact, there are so many stances [where] there are divisions between the Member States. Some [....] Member States want to keep them together to approve everything at [once]. And then some Member States like Finland [are] flexible with taking some files out of the pact and [approving them] before the other files have been negotiated and [agreed]. One of those most important files is the Eurodac that relates to the Dublin system- the registration of asylum-seekers in the countries of first entry. For us, it is nationally significant, but for these so-called frontline States, that is, those Member States in the Mediterranean area who receive most of the asylum-seekers, they see that there is a [considerable] risk (Interview with SK 2022).

The assertion above upholds the rigorous process of negotiations at the EU level before implementation could begin at any of the levels. For example, Finland is flexible in picking the files separately, but the Mediterranean Member States are rigid and want everything approved at once since they consider themselves to be frontline Member States regarding immigration. As argued in this study, MLG's decision-making and implementation negotiations intensify as the level increases. The complications beyond the national borders result from the positions and specific interests of numerous other Member States' actors, with which they try to influence the decisions in their interests. For example, the quote above illustrates that the so-called frontier states are negotiating a particular stance. They believe implementing those decisions can result in considerable implementation risk for them (Panebianco 2022). Accordingly, the Member States that think they stand less chance of benefitting from policies to be implemented but instead shoulder more responsibilities tend to slow the process down and work things out to their advantage (Biermann et al. 2019). This phenomenon can prolong and complicate MLG functionality. That is because those actors believe they might not get enough from the solidarity side when they start implementing those responsibilities (Interview with SK 2022). Also, the turn of events can prolong the policy implementation processes. To illustrate this argument further, the situations of various ongoing crises that affect the European Union directly or indirectly, like the Afghanistan war, Belarusian activities on the EU's external borders, and the Ukraine-

Russia War, affect the negotiation process. For instance, an interviewee (Interview with SK 2022) noted that discussions concerning the New Pact had stalled this year because the authorities had no chance at all to do so. The emergence of other issues can divert attention from implementing a particular policy to more urgent matters, further complicating MLG's activities.

Also, the various procedures, Member States' reluctance, the alliances formed by some Member States, and the actors' personalities make MLG interactions complex and dynamic, leading to prolonged policy implementation. For instance, an interviewee emphasised a typical complex procedure of negotiations which can delay implementation that:

> These negotiations on the legislative proposals can, especially in our field of immigration, be complicated, political, and […] longer. So, it is not unusual if the Commission proposes a directive, and the negotiations with the Member States would last maybe two years. [Member States often have to] compromise, but there is never a guarantee for a successful outcome. So, we have [the] Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) in place. Thus, in the Council, we can vote on legislative proposals during the negotiations. [Still, generally], we try to avoid this because it is such a sensitive field, and [instead] get unanimity. However, if it is not possible, we go for a vote, and as we could see with the initiative that we just talked about, that is, the relocation of refugees initiative that was proposed in 2015-2016; was negotiated for 3 or 4 years, and there was never a successful outcome! (Interview with SS 2021).

The statement above shows that a typical policy decision-making process involving various actors at the EU level can be complicated and prolonged without necessarily achieving the target. It also means that successful policy implementation is derived from appropriate negotiations during policymaking. This example explains why actors tend to negotiate their national stances vigorously. It shows the dynamism and complexities of the EU's overall policymaking and implementation processes. The EU and the Member States can, however, facilitate negotiation by eliminating bottlenecks to improve implementable concrete policies. In other instances, some actors resort to partnerships outside the EU's boundaries with actors they regard as cooperative. Such alliances are called decoupling outside the EU's legal and institutional framework at regional and international intergovernmental stages (Panizzon and van Riemsdijk 2019). These outside inter-partnerships created beyond the EU level raise the question of how these complexities of MLG relationships can be reduced or eliminated to facilitate implementation. It also indicates that the MLG relationship has not considered the influence of actions beyond the supranational level. The procedures can fluctuate depending on the nature or pattern of governance that the actors within the framework adopted. Constructivism explains this full range of institutional dynamics at work in contemporary

Europe in terms of governing immigration through conceptualising the relationship between norms, discourse, language, political and material capabilities. Such relationships underscore the importance of ideas and social constructs in shaping policy decisions related to immigration (Smith 1999).

Again, immigration policy implementation complexities can be prevalent mainly when integrating immigrants (Interview with TK 2020), usually at the national and local levels. For example, the available common structures and procedures for entry into the EU make it a straightforward process, but when it comes to integration, it is usually a domestic affair where the EU is hardly involved. The integration of immigrants into Finnish society is currently classified as a more problematic area that needs attention, especially concerning TCNs (Interview with TK 2020). The difference is that EU citizens exercising their rights under freedom of movement do not encounter such difficulties in integration compared to the TCNs. However, implementing such policies in Finland involves complex dynamics, including various negotiations and two levels within the MLG framework of this study. Therefore, as described in Chapter 2, the national and local level institutions interact because of the common intent of governing immigration within Finland. This research found that cooperation in Finland is less complicated but gets more complex when collaboration extends beyond the national borders to the supranational level. Since the interaction between two institutions can influence the effectiveness of each institution, the typology, consequences, and management of dyadic interactions are crucial in determining the boundary of a regime's complexity, which is influenced by a specific subject matter, not an issue area. This assertion indicates that the complexity of these interactions is more dependent on the particular subject being regulated rather than on broader thematic issues. It emphasises the importance of analyzing and managing interactions between two institutions within a regulatory framework, as these interactions can significantly affect the effectiveness and complexity of the regime, with a focus on the specific subject matter being regulated.

Likewise, Kern and Bulkeley (2009, p.312) contend that "the top-down and bottom-up dynamics" are not limited to the EU and the Member States; instead, they extend to the relationship between the EU and local authorities in the MLG setting. Interactions can occur among the actors separately at the local and national levels and occasionally between the EU and local levels. This assertion is consistent with Spehar et al.'s (2017, p.114) argument that "although potential policies will be formulated and developed at every governance level, the actors will increasingly engage with one another". This claim can explain the existing

fuzziness within the MLG framework, where actors can cross administrative boundaries and directly or indirectly interact on a level that does not strictly follow the directions of the MLG concept. For instance, the city of Helsinki, which operates at the local level, has different departments whose actors interact to make local-level decisions and then interact with the national level actors. Mancheva et al. (2023, p.15) also underscore the argument that "in Finland, collaborative institutions are established across governmental levels, including the national and [local] levels".

Similarly, the national actors interact at the national and local levels to have standard national policies. These policies are the basis of Finland's negotiations and lines of the arguments presented at the EU level. In line with this claim, Joki and Wolffhardt (2017, p.18) contended that:

> The very nature of migrant integration as a cross-cutting policy field and its linkages with national admission and residence policies mean that municipal efforts always relate to policies pursued on the national, regional (in particular decentralised or federal states), and the European levels in the EU member states.

This explanation shows parallel or horizontal and vertical MLG relationships among the actors. The horizontal level relationship seems much smoother for decision-making and implementation since actors see themselves as equals. Scholten's (2012, p.220) argument is consistent with this assertion that local-level interaction involves a bottom-up approach where local governments set and implement policies. However, local-level interactions can also become complex during negotiations since no particular actor has a higher authority over the other. In contrast, vertical relationships are more challenging to manage because although some levels may be higher, the controlling aspect must disappear within the MLG framework, whereby no actor is considered superior to the other. Such a relationship also questions the democratic principles of the EU, which Kohler-Koch and Rittberger (2006) described as contradictory. For instance, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2016) in Finland noted that the drafting of the Government Integration Programme occurred concurrently with the Integration Partnership Programme, which involved various actors on different levels of governance. Thus, sharing authority in a vertical relationship can undermine democratic principles, but the result of policy decisions must be to execute them; hence, their implementation should instead be the focus of the MLG relationship. Again, Dolinar (2010, p.98) argued that despite the potential shortcomings of the MLG relationship in undermining democratic principles, its potential to make democratic decisions in open

dialogues and transparency cannot be overlooked. Such an analogy is what constructivists explain that: constructivism provides a compelling explanation for European governance by emphasising the crucial role of intersubjective understandings and discourses in shaping the identities, interests, and interactions of actors over time (Smith 1999).

Local efforts in immigration competencies (predominantly at the national level) are gradually penetrating the national and EU-level decision-making and policy implementation. As discussed in Chapter 4, such actions are noticeable in the integration programmes municipalities and cities within the EU Member States pursue to integrate immigrants. However, since the national level is mainly the interface between the EU and the local level, the national level authorities usually interact directly with the local level. The outcomes of these interactions are reflected at the EU level, as mentioned above. Occasionally, the local level directly interacts with the EU level but not on complex immigration policy and decision negotiations or implementation. To illustrate this, a respondent described this direct involvement of the local level with the EU as:

> For instance, the actors from the regional or local level can then apply for the financing directly, usually with their counterparts in the other Member States. So, usually, it is either two or three Member States implementing it together, but it can be at the very local level. [However], the national levels are involved in drafting the regulations, which dictate the contents and set the limitations, plus the programming work and even the Union's Actions. [Also], the Member States can contribute to what should be done at the Union level. Hence, there may be a bit of indirect national level impact [......], but [practically] the local level actors can implement projects directly with direct finance from the Commission (Interview with VS 2022).

The narrative above indicates that the local actors contribute directly through the various integration and intervention programmes they undertake at their level. As already mentioned, they also develop local policies through negotiations, which they implement (Ponzo 2017). Interestingly, Rijavec and Pevcin (2018, p.85) observed that "the small EU countries hardly involve any subnational actors in policymaking processes or networking". This assertion indicates a significant shortfall of the MLG concept, which is supposed to nest and involve all actors within the framework almost on equal terms. As Rijavec and Pevcin (2018) claimed, in those countries, subnational actors are relatively weaker than their national level counterparts. However, this research suggests otherwise because, in Finland, local actors actively negotiate with the national level, particularly in immigration policy implementation

(Martikainen et al. 2012; Interview with FL 2020). After these negotiations, the agreed solutions are propelled to the EU level in a vertical or diagonal MLG relationship.

The numerous national actors interacting have divergent views, opinions, ideologies, and perspectives, making negotiations and implementation even more complex. For instance, "within the Finnish Parliament (Eduskunta), all standing committees are involved in handling EU issues" (Raunio and Wiberg 2001, p.71). However, it is imperative to acknowledge that "the mere presence of the numerous actors at multilevel does not result in MLG automatically as is traditionally perceived" (Spehar et al. 2017, p.114). The actors must interact as unified entities with a joint aim to govern immigration in Finland and EU-wide. For example, the Finnish Ministry of Interior (2013, p.16) asserted that:

> Migration issues form part of the work of various administrative branches and different authorities. The divisions of responsibility must be clear and appropriate, but the administration must also function well as a whole. Besides inter-ministerial collaboration, greater cooperation will also be needed between other entities, particularly between local and central governments.

This assertion supports the earlier argument that all the actors involved within the MLG framework must be engaged and collaborative to attain their goals. Constructivists argue that a single, dominant factor does not dictate the identity and behaviour of a State in global politics. Instead, they emphasise the transformative impact of change arising from the interactions among States, emphasising elements such as culture, social values, identity, and interests (Iwuoha and Mbaegbu 2021). Constructivism supports the idea that within the MLG framework, collaborative engagement is crucial, and multiple factors, not just one dominant factor, shape the identity and behaviour of states in global politics (Christiansen et al. 1999).

Another crucial dimension of policy implementation dynamics in this research is how the national level negotiates with the EU-level actors, which is part of the overall MLG continuum, as discussed. Even so, national level competencies and sovereignty sometimes overshadow the importance of the EU level, leading to complexities in policy implementation. For instance, Porumbescu (2019, p.39) noted that:

> Responsibility and decision-making do not lay predominantly on the communitarian institutional system but instead on the Member States, who chose to preserve their sovereign right to decide whether to accept migrants, depending on their national regulations and interests.

This inference is coherent with the argument by Carmel (2014) that the Member States export their concerns and agendas to the EU level in what is described as venue-shopping. Therefore, venue-shopping causes the nested governance to get more complicated because these country-specific interests develop into entangled fierce debates, deliberations, and side-takings through alliances and support towards particular policy areas of national or regional interests. For instance, an EU official respondent from the EU Commission stated that:

> In labour migration, the negotiations indeed tend to be complicated. For example, we recently agreed on reforming the EU Blue Card Directives on highly-skilled internationals. Yet, as I said, in a way, it is easy for the Member States to agree to this because all they have to do is agree to the legislation, but they cannot be obliged to make use of it because they are always in charge of the numbers of labour migration. That is very different because we have no legislative powers in this field (Interview with SS 2021).

This claim indicates how the sovereignty of Member States can overshadow the EU's supranational status within the MLG framework. It shows the essence of MLG in blurring the importance of the different political fields and levels and enables diverse actors to be actively engaged in performing different multilevel strategies and activities (Kern and Bulkeley 2009). At such junctures, the joint labour migration governance that the Member States are often sceptical about emerges. For instance, if the EU exercised jurisdiction in such areas, the Member States would have no choice in determining who enters and leaves their territories. In effect, this argument implies that the EU would possibly impose migrants on the Member States and decide who should go to which country and why. For example, the challenges of the EU relocation policy during the 2015-2016 migration crisis are typical cases of distrust by the Member States in implementing EU policies and protecting their sovereignty (Wahlbeck 2019). Consequently, clearly distinguishing where boundaries overlap and allocating responsibilities can be a helpful strategy for minimising these challenges. For instance, Spehar et al. (2017, p.116) argued that "MLG structures with unclear chains of command allow all involved actors to expect other actors to take the lead in politically controversial matters that demand many resources or are administratively complicated".

This assertion doubles as an advantage because the essence of MLG interaction is to blur these boundaries and form a solid network of actors in harmonious partnerships. However, it shows that without a proper distinction of limits in this nested governance network, the

actors involved at whatever level become reluctant to initiate actions and are circumspect in their transactions. Terrón and Pinyol (2018, p.8) state that "this lack of ambition creates troubles at different levels". Scholten (2012) also contends that differential policy implementation between levels results in complex interactions and coordination of efforts. Similarly, an OECD (2018, p.84) report emphasised that weaknesses in MLG arise from irregularities across the different governance levels since each level depends on the other for skills, information, competencies and resources. However, Porumbescu (2019, p. 42) argued that 'the specificity of the European system of ruling and deciding on matters related to international migration resides in the balance of power between the supranational institutions and the Member States'. This contention aligns with the constructivist perspective, asserting that the EU does not solely rely on its initial organs of political and legal institutions, but it has evolved to encompass shared norms, universally accepted rules and decision-making procedures (Christiansen et al. 1999). Porumbescu's (2019) assertion is, hence, consistent with what one of the interviewees stated that:

> The more significant issue with the EU is that it is generally not very transparent. It is often a bit unclear how the final policies of the EU get formed. Hence, the EU would have to do some work regarding transparency and be [more precise] where the mandate of the Union is (Interview with JA 2021).

Although these challenges of MLG abound, Maggetti and Trein (2018, p.361) pointed out that "policymakers shift competencies to the supranational level to tackle policy challenges that the Member States cannot deal with themselves". For example, Finland strongly supported the creation of the CEAS, which was an opportunity for Finland to export its policies and priorities to the EU level (Wahlbeck 2019b). According to Wahlbeck (2019b, p.305), Finland was reasonably productive at this in that it was considered one of the medium regulatory States (with a low number of asylum-seekers but a high level of administrative capacity) that significantly influenced the directives of the CEAS. As discussed above, this claim indicates that proactiveness can facilitate a smaller Member State's influence in EU negotiations and policy implementation. The more significant issue remains the extent to which this is possible, but Mainwaring's (2012) research demonstrates that these smaller EU Member States can use non-material power to influence decision-making and implementation. To illustrate this, Mainwaring (2012) argued that Malta and the Republic of Cyprus used non-material power by claiming they were just small frontier States that had to shoulder heavy responsibility. That is, they also present irregular migration as a national

threat or crisis (securitisation). In the end, solidarity and sharing burdens become the 'necessary evil' that the Member States must confront when implementing common policies.

5.5   The Finnish Case in Implementing EU's Solidarity and Burden-sharing.

This section offers detailed evaluations of what constitutes solidarity and burden-sharing in the overall immigration governance in Finland and the EU. It also covers an MLG perspective and some critical decisions undertaken in immigration policy implementation. According to King and Lulle (2016), immigration challenges are inevitable within the EU. Hence, there is a need for consistent but practical immigration policies based on solidarity and burden-sharing among the Member States. To emphasise this argument, the European Council (2017, p.5) concludes that:

> ….the practical application of the principles of responsibility and solidarity remains a shared objective. The European Council calls for further efforts to rapidly deliver on all aspects of the comprehensive migration policy resilient to future crises, including with the aim of achieving consensus….. (European Council 2017, p.5).

According to Barslund et al. (2019, p.17), "EU Member States remain divided on rebuilding Europe's asylum, refugee and immigration policies even years after the 2015-2016 [migration] crisis". Meanwhile, they were equally divided on issues during the 2015-2016 migration crisis, as evidenced by the statements issued in the European Council by the different Member States. For instance, on the subject of provisional measures of international protection for the benefit of Italy, Greece and Hungary, Finland made the following statement:

> Finland was prepared to accept the proposed allocation and to show solidarity to the affected countries by relocating about 2,400 people. Nevertheless, Finland couldn't vote in favour [of] a solution where the allocation was part of a Council Decision. For us, it was imperative that the distribution would have been separated from the Decision made today, and the allocation would have been agreed upon by the Member States separately by a resolution. It was essential that the goal of 120,000 was reached (European Council 2015, p.6).

The statement above reveals that Finland, like the other Member States, considered solidarity measures even when there were disagreements and divisions about the resolutions and approaches at the EU stage. For example, Slovakia remarked on the same issue that:

> To demonstrate solidarity, however, the Slovak Republic is set to continue alleviating the pressure experienced by some Member States via a temporary relocation scheme, which accommodates applicants seeking asylum in those respective Member States during a pending asylum procedure (European Council 2015, p.8).

However, it is essential to remember that the period of making such crucial statements was a time of crisis. That is, there was an ongoing crisis, and the Member States issued statements showing they wanted to fulfil the essence of solidarity and burden-sharing during such occasions. Pronouncing solidarity and executing them are, however, not mutually inclusive. For instance, although the Member States favoured the relocation policy by voting unanimously, the implementation was woeful (Geddes and Scholten 2016), as discussed in Chapters 2 and 6. Therefore, solidarity and burden-sharing become uncertain when practical implementation issues confront the EU Member States. For instance, Heimann et al. (2019, p.209) argued that "the debate on solidarity in Europe has never been as intense, chatoyant, diverse and fragmented as it has become during the so-called refugee crisis". This act of solidarity and burden-sharing is advocated fervently in the New EU Pact. Hence, this New Pact requires more compromises than the previous one that was introduced during the 2015-2016 immigration (De Wenden 2021, p.1).

As mentioned in Chapter 4, solidarity is one of Finland's main interests concerning immigration governance because of several factors, emphasising its long EU's external border with Russia. Solidarity and burden-sharing are therefore examined in the context of Finnish immigration policy, its relationship with the EU and why Finnish actors revere it. Heidbreder (2014, p.4) contends that "the EU's principle of solidarity and shared responsibility creates adequate functional pressure for harmonised or at least coordinated rules on regulating migration among the Member States". In line with that argument, Carmel (2014, p.6) suggests that:

> Co-producing migration policies, whereby aims, targets, and trajectories are elaborated, contested, and developed across both national and European political fields, constitute EU migration governance. This opinion gives a broader view of policy consequences of EU action in the Member States and across the Union as a whole.

The assertion above explains MLG's relevance in decision-making and implementation regarding solidarity and responsibility-sharing principles. Although policy decision-making and implementation in MLG are complex processes, they are crucial ways of co-producing

migration policies if well managed since all the relevant actors may already be in support of the outcome. Therefore, this solidarity and responsibility-sharing principle is essential for Finland based on future expectations and being an active Member State of the Union.

According to Salo and Rydgren (2018, p.243), Finland distinguishes itself as the "most integrationist and constructive Nordic EU Member State". This claim implies that Finland is a proactive and cooperative Member State of the EU, with the Union's interests at heart, and seeks EU-wide solutions as well (Finnish Government 2021). For instance, unlike Denmark, Finland entered the EU without significant objections and opt-outs and has participated in the Union's main projects like the EMU and Schengen (Salo and Rydgren 2018). Hence, Finland is more committed to engaging with the EU's activities in all spheres. For example, Finland actively and constructively participates in strengthening collaboration in European foreign and defence policy, internal security and migration policy (Finnish Border Guards Undated).

Meanwhile, solidarity and burden-sharing seem to worry those so-called frontier States because they are the main entry points for immigrants. These states have encountered difficulties with burden sharing, similar to the relocation policy in 2015 (Geddes and Scholten 2016). Many argue that these frontline countries instead seek global solutions or shift the problem to "weaker" countries, including other frontier states, transit and neighbouring countries (Panizzon and van Riemsdijk 2019, p.1226; Ambrosini 2018). Such experiences are significant limitations to MLG's ability to attain its goal of unanimous action within a nested government. It also implies that a casual decoupling has occurred, which is different from the decoupling features explained in Chapter 3. For example, Coman et al. (2020, p.12) highlight that the EU externalises solutions to its migration problem to third countries; a case in point is when the EU signed a joint Action Plan with Turkey, provisionally agreed upon in October 2015.

In such a case, for instance, Barslund et al. (2019, p.15) contended that "designing policies for border management and asylum must consider humanitarian principles". Also, such policies need the support of the citizens of Europe. That way, sharing responsibility for refugee protection among the EU Member States and host countries worldwide would be fairer. This argument mainly emphasises designing asylum and border management policies regarding solidarity and burden-sharing. However, as King and Lulle (2016) suggest, addressing those issues demands flexibility and timeliness. More so, there is an increasing distrust and divergence between the Member States; this is especially common between the

eastern and western States (Wolff 2020, p.249), which limits MLG functionality. Additionally, some Member States have taken a more uncompromising stand on common EU migration and asylum policies and strongly oppose solidarity measures, leading to them introducing actions contrary to common EU principles. Such Member States include Austria and Denmark, for instance, which "have adopted radical positions on asylum by rejecting the EU's common immigration and asylum policy and seeking to process asylum applications remotely in the countries of departure or transit" (De Wenden 2021, p.2).

These positions taken by some Member States result from the EU not being able to make burden-sharing compulsory for the Member States, mainly when non-participant Member States in the 2015-2016 crisis relocation policy implementation went unpunished (De Wenden 2021, p.4). Refugee protection is also considered "a zero-sum game", making it difficult for the Member States to cooperate in this area of immigration governance (Niemann and Zaun 2018, p.13). On this issue, for instance, the European Council (2017, p.5) opined that:

> Concerning the internal dimension, applying the principles of responsibility and solidarity remains a shared objective. The European Council calls for further efforts to rapidly deliver on all aspects of the comprehensive migration policy resilient to future crises, including with the aim of achieving consensus on the EU's asylum policy [….] (Conclusion 11).

This declaration suggests that the EU-level complex policy implementation demands solidarity and burden sharing as a principal solution within the general MLG context. Consequently, Heimann et al. (2019, p.209) argued that universal solidarity is non-existent because most participating Member States do not share the same goal. They also do not define the situation's urgency in the same manner. Likewise, they might seek to swerve joint efforts' financial or political costs. It is crucial to note that a critical feature of solidarity requires sharing one's burden with another instead of on behalf of someone else. For instance, an interviewee stated that:

> The issues in the Mediterranean countries differ! For example, the situation in Cyprus is that they receive [many] asylum-seekers from the north, which they call occupied territory. Italy- I think it is clear they receive most of these asylum-seekers across the Mediterranean. Greece has a massive problem with Turkey. Malta is pretty constructive, but of course, they have a problem with the numbers. In Spain, most of the asylum-seekers come from the Canary Islands and also from Latin America [….] (Interview with SK 2022).

The situations differ in these countries, but they still support each other during negotiations and have joint statements compared to the other Member States. The latter does not have a direct impact on migrants' intrusions. These reasons explain why the EU Member States have not made significant headways regarding solidarity. The lack of consensus on solidarity and burden-sharing in migration governance continues to surge while the EU seeks diverse ways to overcome the situation. Even in the situation where they reached some consensus, for instance, the relocation policy, implementation was unsuccessful. These concerns and the EU's approach (for example, return sponsorships) to overcoming them are noticeable in the New Pact. Therefore, Finland's proactiveness in EU's activities has an element of future solidarity seeking, although that is currently not of much concern to them.

5.6   Summary

This chapter primarily discussed Finland's connection with the EU level within the complex MLG framework from a constructivist perspective. That is, it emphasised that the interactions at the national and local levels are not as intricate as those between the national and EU levels. This argument indicates that solving complex issues at the EU level and getting implementation started requires compromises. However, these compromises, generally in the form of solidarity and burden-sharing at the EU level, have not worked in their current state. The absence of a resolution in applying measures of solidarity and burden-sharing prompted the EU to introduce amendments in its New Pact following the migration crisis of 2015-2016. The answer does not lie in the decoupling that the Member States embark on to seek solutions beyond the EU level. Some of these decoupled measures might work, but the after-effects indirectly influence the other actors within this entangled MLG network. Hence, the EU's actions should consider migration problems from their root. This approach implies a deeper consideration of factors such as economic disparities, conflict, climate change, and other root causes that drive people to migrate. By analyzing and addressing these root causes, the EU aims to develop more effective and sustainable solutions to manage migration flows and mitigate associated challenges. Introducing cosmetic solutions after the issues have happened has so far been unhelpful. Although this argument suggests that the EU-level decision-making on policy implementation is more complex than its equivalent at the national and local levels, the latter is less complicated because of the national interests, mutual culture and trust. Therefore, the relevance of the MLG framework in depicting the complexities involved in immigration governance and social constructivism in explaining it shows that Finland (like any other Member State) will be disappointed if it expects the exact national situations at the EU level. Such

disappointments were experienced during the 2015-2016 migration crisis, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The next chapter examines a case study of deportation reflecting the practical nature of the MLG framework in everyday situations and when the 2015-2016 crisis occurred, and how Social Constructivism examines and clarifies the pragmatic dynamism and complexity of MLG of immigration.

CHAPTER 6 THE CASE STUDY OF THE PERIODS BEFORE (2010-2015),

DURING (2015-2016) AND AFTER (2017-2022) THE MIGRATION CRISIS.

6.0   Introduction

Chapter 4 of this thesis discussed the making and implementation of immigration policy decisions on a multilevel in everyday situations in Finland and the EU. Subsequently, Chapter 5 examined collaborations between the various actors within the MLG relationship from a constructivist perspective. The work of Vlassis (2022) strongly emphasises adopting a constructivist perspective centred around actors, with a focus on the agents involved in inter-organisational cooperation (MLG). His analysis underscored the importance of considering the dynamics of actors' authority, especially in times of crisis, highlighting issues that warrant further exploration. Changes in governance dynamics clarify the events of the 2015-2016 migration crisis (Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk 2019). What remains unexplored, however, which this study attempts to explain in this chapter, are the interactions before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis between actors on a multilevel, using the case of Finland and the EU, which are the chapter's central discussion. It examines this phenomenon by evaluating the Return Directive (with emphasis on the deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees) using these three time periods: before (2010-2015), during (2015-2016), and after (2017-2022) the migration crisis. Thus, this chapter begins with a general introduction to the 2015-2016 migration crisis and then examines the situations before, during and after the crisis. The final part analyses the deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees as a case of the practical implementation of the return directive.

6.1   Multilevel Policy Decision-making and Implementation in Emergencies

Between 2015 and 2016, a migration crisis occurred with displaced TCNs on a large scale in the EU and "although the EU seemed to be caught rather unprepared, EU institutions had focussed on migration since spring 2015" (Niemann and Zaun 2018, p.5). This period presented many challenges to decision-makers such as governments, parliamentarians, politicians, civil servants and other important and less crucial actors. During this migration crisis, the national (local level inclusive) and EU levels made various decisions to address the problem (Vanto et al. 2021). Some of these decisions and policies, taken in the different Member States, were similar, while others were bespoke to the challenges faced by particular Member States (EMN 2018). For instance, in Finland, numerous politicians offered compelling and divergent views on changing legislation to cater for the crisis. The national

level also demanded actions from the EU level (Interview with JT 2020). To give an example, the then-leader of the Finns Party, Timo Soini, stated that:

> Each country is responsible for asylum-seekers in its own territory. Decision-making power must be in national hands. The decision-making powers of immigration policy must not be transferred to the Commission. (Timo Soini 2015).

The assertion above reflects anti-immigrant and anti-EU sentiments in immigration governance, which contradicts the solidarity and burden-sharing that the EU seeks from its Member States. For instance, the European Commission (2020, p.6) remarked that "national policies must be coherent with the overall European approach", which is what the MLG framework reflects: that all actors must be actively involved in the interactions at all levels towards attaining a common goal. Likewise, constructivist theory underscores the "socio-cultural-historical" contextuality of knowledge, emphasising the dynamic nature of social interactions and the practices involved in constructing worlds within a multilevel relationship (Jovanović, p.521). A thorough exploration of various facets, including a state's "historical development, cultural evolution, political and social institutions, and economic conditions", therefore contributes to a deeper understanding of the state's identity and interests (Iwuoha and Mbaegbu 2021, p.277). Meanwhile, the situation in Finland during this period was also tense. For example, the response of one of the interviewees describes the kind of atmosphere in Finland during this period. The interviewee asserted that:

> I think it was domestic politics because the True Finns were in government, and for them, any idea of us giving away power to the EU to decide these things was an impossible pill to swallow! (Interview with AA 2021).

The quotation above represents a manifestation of the tension during that period. Despite the prevailing tensions, authorities expedited decision-making processes, thereby mitigating the impact of the crisis at the national level. Concurrently, the EU faced supranational challenges due to disagreements and a lack of solidarity arrangements, while some Member States remained defiant (Interviews with AA, AK 2021; TK and IH 2020). For instance, the Council of the European Union (2015c, p.3) agreed to establish provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy, Greece and Hungary by QMV. However, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia voted against the proposal, while Finland abstained (Wahlbeck 2019b). This example illustrates the nature of disagreements that engulfed the EU in those crucial moments when the EU and the Member

States sought all possible means to resolve the crisis. Panebianco (2022, p.1399) argued that "the migration crisis [showed how] unfeasible burden-sharing is and showed how externalising burdens to non-EU actors [becomes] necessary by default". The constructivist interpretation of the phenomenon presented above posits that social factors shape pragmatic concepts. Such a relationship is due to the existence of diverse methods for categorising phenomena, with historical contexts and underlying purposes serving as determinants for the adoption of specific classifications rather than others (Bevir 2009). The constructivist perspective thus emphasises that social influences, personal histories, and individual purposes collectively contribute to shaping the understanding and use of pragmatic concepts like the MLG of immigration governance and the practicality of the relationship during a crisis. It emphasises the dynamic and context-dependent nature of language and meaning construction in a social context.

As stated in the paragraph above, most of these efforts to curtail the crisis were at the national level. Many national level actors criticised the EU leaders for not providing the appropriate tools, governance, and assistance needed to tackle the crisis (Interview with TK 2020). For example, Panebianco (2022, p.1404) claimed that the European leaders and EU institutions [could not] Europeanise the refugee crisis, [which] showed the inadequateness of the EU legal framework for a common asylum and migration policy. One reason for this perception of the EU's failure to address the crisis by the diverse actors, as noted by Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.4), is that:

> The EU has historically developed its crisis-response capacity in a punctuated and fragmentary manner. There is no blueprint for institutional crisis response within the bloc; indeed, Member States have created strikingly different national crisis-management mechanisms.

From the quote above, it is evident that the EU, as a significant player within the MLG relationship, does not have a standardised response system to emergencies. As explained in Chapter 4, making and implementing immigration policy decisions are influenced by the national level within the MLG relationship due in part to the sovereignty of the Member States and the fact that the Member States constitute the EU (Oros 2013). Due to varying crisis response mechanisms among Member States, the adoption of a unified implementation approach is challenging (Niemann and Zaun 2018). Implementing standardised procedures on a shared EU platform may result in intricate negotiations, disorder, disagreements, and misunderstandings. Interestingly, the Member States perceived the EU unsuccessfully

attempted to resolve the situation, which, according to some interviewees, triggered the proposition of the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum for managing immigration (Interviews with RK, IH and JT 2020; AA 2021). In contrast, the European Court of Auditors (2019, p.6) elaborated that the "EU devised several measures to supplement the funding provided to the Member States under its migration management policy" to address the crisis. This evidence suggests that the EU developed measures to manage the crisis, although the impacts seemed to many stakeholders and actors as minimal.

Although yet to be introduced, this New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum has met resistance from some Member States (De Wenden 2021). For instance, the 'Visegrád Four' have rejected it for being too relaxed and called for the EU to stop migration altogether and not just manage it (Euronews 24/09/2020). The Euronews (24/09/2020, paragraphs 1-3) published that:

> The EU's bid to reform its migration policy has been met with mixed reactions from [several] countries, with Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic outright opposing it. Zoltan Kovacs, the spokesman for Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, said on Twitter that the country's stance on migration "has been clear and unchanged" since 2015. 'We must ensure that the external borders of the EU and the Schengen Area remain perfectly sealed along all section[s]'.

The excerpt above demonstrates the dynamics and complexity at the EU level in handling the MLG of migration. This argument mirrors the contention of Chebel d'Appollonia (2019, p.195) that the EU's complex migration policy shows that:

> Differentiation is the raison d'être of the EU immigration policy [relating] to the motivations of the Member States in their attempt to protect their national interests while having to address common transnational issues.

Therefore, differentiation has been crucial for the EU to carry out its joint plan and programmes in the Member States despite the EU seeking unanimity. When some Member States oppose the EU's approaches, the EU cannot act uniformly accordingly in cases such as the unsuccessful implementation of the relocation policy during the 2015-2016 migrant crisis and the unapproved European Agenda on Migration of 2015. Actions by some uncooperative Member States can prevent progress on fronts like policy implementation and collective interests for the entire Union. It is also relevant to remember that the European Agenda on migration, introduced in 2015-2016 as the EU's measures addressing the crisis,

was never approved by the Member States (Interview with SN 2021), and the "New Pact is not a Treaty that has a binding effect" on signatories (De Wenden 2021, p.2). Coman et al. (2020) noted that the EU introduced the European Agenda on Migration in 2015 to respond to the significant arrivals of migrants on its territory. Remarkably, the EU quickly introduced this agenda in response to the death of over eight hundred refugees in a single-boat disaster on the Mediterranean in April 2015 (Vaughan-Williams 2015). It also aimed to equip the EU and the Member States with the tools to manage migration better in the medium and long term regarding legal and irregular migration, border management and asylum (Council of the European Union 2015b), although it did not achieve the effects it was supposed to. Therefore, the 2015-2016 crisis emphasised the significance of apt policies and measures needed to manage immigration regularly and in emergencies within the EU.

In response to this unsuccessful attempt by the EU, the individual Member States introduced new ways and instruments to curtail the ongoing crisis (EMN 2018). For example, the authorities in Finland established a reception centre at the Tornio border with Sweden. The decision to set up this centre was due to its proximity to the border. At that centre, they registered between five hundred and eight hundred asylum-seekers arriving in Finland daily, mainly from Sweden (Interviews with IH and JL 2020). The introduction of this hotspot approach during the crisis at the Finnish-Sweden border proved constructive in many ways. For instance, this initiative eliminated the cost of transporting all arriving migrants to other centres across the country before registering them and relocating them afterwards. An interviewee noted that such decisions came from higher-level officers who believed in the approach because, during that period, most migrants were crossing into Finland through this border (Interview with IH 2020). This evidence explains how the decisions made at one level can reflect across all the others within the MLG network without them necessarily agreeing. The coordination of such activities is also relevant to the MLG relationship. For example, the Police and Border Guards registered the applicants, and then the FIS took over and made decisions on the applications (Interviews with JL and IH 2020). Again, the Police served the decisions to applicants after the FIS had made them (Interview with JL 2020). This collaborative effort yielded medium and long-term effects. For instance, the EMN (2018, p.18) argued that "Finland had a greater capacity to register all migrants at the border in northern Sweden before placements in the various reception centres".

This preceding preliminary evaluation indicates collaboration between the immigration governance authorities at the national and local levels during a crisis. Initially, the cooperation and resolution of the crisis were chaotic as the Finnish authorities were confused

about the required steps and measures to take (PH 2020; JA, AA 2022). However, this state of confusion took a different turn when the Finnish authorities became familiar with the chaos and necessary approaches to adopt. For example, the Finnish authorities diverted and allocated resources, established working groups, made specific changes to existing legislation, and made decisions concerning integration efforts, all in a fast-paced environment. This speed of facilitating effort distinguishes between creating and implementing policy decisions typically and during a crisis. The argument above aligns with the constructivist's contention that policy changes entail a significant shift, encompassing not just alterations in policy preferences but also a transformation in the normative and cognitive ideas that form the basis for these preferences (Paster 2005). That is, it highlights the dynamic nature of policymaking, especially in times of crisis, where rapid and transformative changes may occur, as discussed in the context above.

As described in Chapter 4, intensive coordination at different levels made the overall measures adopted worthwhile (EMN 2018; Interviews with TK, IH, JL and PH 2020). This coordination and collaboration depicted the relevance of MLG interactions during the crisis. The European Committee of the Regions (2019) thus emphasised that at the policy coordination stage, all the governance levels must participate actively, implying that mutual interdependence is required. Social constructivists' argument that knowledge and social contexts are mutually interdependent is evident in this analysis, as the study contends that knowledge construction relies on the interconnected dynamics of social understanding and interaction among diverse actors governing immigration at the various levels (Omodan and Tsotetsi 2020; Bevir 2009). This argument aligns with the idea that learning is a social and collaborative endeavour, and the context in which learning occurs can significantly shape the construction of knowledge.

However, Collet and Le Coz (2018, p.28) argued that:

> The number of actors involved in the [2015-2016 immigration] crisis response was dizzying. Hence, coordination was needed on several layers, from the high-level political direction, through policy and technical coordination down to the implementation of policy choices on the ground.

The excerpt above shows a typical example of the MLG conceptual framework's application in a time of pressure on the system. The number of actors increased and therefore required proper coordination. This analysis suggests that new actors can become involved in governance during a crisis because of unexpected and increased needs, and the system

changes must accommodate them, ultimately culminating in the need for coordination since these actors are new, as Collet and Le Coz (2018) argued.

6.2   Immigration Governance Before the 2015-2016 Crisis

Immigration governance has been ongoing even before the 2015-2016 crisis. An increasing number of asylum-seekers had been arriving in the EU through the Mediterranean in the years preceding the crisis (Doomernik and Glorius 2016; Ambrosini 2018). The crisis peaked in 2015 when over one million people embarked on the treacherous journey (European Court of Auditors 2019). This sub-section analyses some events, policies and decisions within the EU and Finland that heralded the crisis. Before the 2015 crisis, the EU's primary focus had been to alleviate the number of casualties in the central Mediterranean (Collet and Le Coz 2018, p.7). This issue of the increasing number of fatalities in the central Mediterranean and the application of the classic Brussels blueprint by the EU until Autumn 2015, when the crisis peaked, led the EU to divert to different forms of solution. Collet and Le Coz (2018, p.10) argued that:

> As central Mediterranean crossings increased during the first months of 2015, the cycle of shock and reaction picked up speed; more than 800 lives were lost. These casualties resulted in the hasty development of a ten-point plan drafted by officials in DG HOME in just a matter of days and was subsequently endorsed at what was to become the first of many European Council Meetings dedicated to the issue of managing migration.

The assertion above suggests that certain events signalled an imminent crisis immediately before the main event. It also depicts the urgent framing of decisions and policies in emergencies. That is, within a matter of days, the DG for Migration and Home Affairs swiftly developed plans[8] and policies, which were endorsed at a European Council meeting. However, for various reasons, the EU authorities ignored the impact of preceding occurrences until they led to the crisis. For instance, European leaders underestimated the attractiveness of safer, more direct routes for those seeking passage to Europe. The authorities remained unresponsive about the level these arrivals might reach (Collet and Le Coz 2018, p.13). Such impassiveness from the authorities was associated with confusion over appropriate responses and who led them at the EU level, culminating in the incidents' escalation until they peaked in the autumn of 2015. Panebianco (2022, p.1403), however,

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[8] Commissioner Avramopoulous presented a ten-point plan which was generally welcome by Ministers (Council of the European Union 2015b, p.2).

contended that the Member States, EU institutions and the European public saw a need to develop measures to tackle the humanitarian crisis.

In Finland, just a few months before the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the Finns party had just joined the Finnish coalition government alongside other right-of-centre parties (Lönnqvist et al. 2019). This alliance led the then-Finnish Government to develop new immigration policy measures (which were not so migrant-friendly). Simultaneously, the government became more hesitant toward the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) than previously (Wahlbeck 2019a, p.3). Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck (2018) indicated that the Finnish coalition government's official programme included some elements like restrictive immigration policies of the True Finn party's immigration programmes. It should be emphasised that the True Finn party gained prominence by employing vehement anti-immigrant and anti-EU rhetoric and sentiments in their campaign messages (Wahlbeck 2019b; Ylä-Anttila and Ylä-Anttila 2015). As noted in Chapter 4, the Finns Party ostensibly (Wahlbeck 2019a) influenced Finland's decisions and positions at the EU level during this period, particularly in abstaining from voting on the relocation policy.

6.2.1 Anticipating the Crisis at the National Level

The 2015-2016 crisis surprised many, including policy and decision-makers, operational bodies, and citizens across the EU (Interview with JT 2020). These shocks were intense in the initial stages because of the unpreparedness of the EU and the individual Member States to resolve these large movements (Interview with TK 2020). An interviewee explained that:

> If you look at the situation in Europe [then], the total number of people moving from South to North [increased] quickly. That was surprising or amazing because if you take Finland [for instance], these people [came] through our northern border with Sweden. [But], if you look at the Map, [the entry point] was nearly in Lapland in Finland, [but] the trip from Greece [to our northern border] was so far [but a] vast number [.......] managed to [cover] that very quickly. [I am] talking about days, [not months, which] was astonishing. We have not seen that kind of movement before on our northern border with Sweden (Interview with IH 2020).

The claim above is a typical indicator of how Finland, for instance, did not expect such a large-scale movement towards its borders because of its geographical location compared to Greece, Italy, or Spain. As the interviewee said, such a significant movement had been unseen on the Finnish borders before the crisis. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2016, p.9) in Finland expressed a similar sentiment that:

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> In 2015, Finland's number of asylum-seekers grew approximately tenfold compared to the years before. Such significant growth was unexpected and posed a challenge to the asylum-seeker reception system.

This claim indicates that there were mounting pressures on policymakers to introduce measures that could swiftly mitigate the dilemma and prevent further escalation (Interview with RK 2020). However, it should be acknowledged that decisions and policymakers are equally cautious in such instances. This caution is because developing and implementing stringent standards and policies are usually reprehended because of the democratic values enshrined in the Member States' constitutions and being signatories to international human rights conventions (Civil and Political Rights and Human Rights Conventions). They, thus, needed to adopt softer but robust policies that are considered humane and efficient. Accordingly, the Finnish Government (2015, p.39) declared that:

> Migration should be well managed. Procedures will be reviewed to speed up the processing of asylum applications to ensure swift decisions and returns and to prevent possible abuses.

Similarly, the European Court of Auditors (2021, p.7) emphasised that "an effective and well-managed returns policy is an essential part of a comprehensive immigration policy". This perspective resonates with Servent's (2011, p.9) contention that the Returns Directive is a fundamental "instrument in the construction of the EU's immigration policy".

Another surprising aspect of the 2015-2016 migration crisis in the Finnish context was the unusual arrival of large numbers of migrants from the Russia-Finnish border. The Russian authorities typically prevent all migrants without proper documentation from travelling to Finland on their side of the border (Interview with IH 2020, EMN 2017). However, in this case, the Finnish authorities noticed that some peculiar nationalities started arriving in their hundreds through two northern entry points between Finland and Russia, which was surprising to the Finnish authorities. For instance, the then Finnish Minister of Interior, Petteri Orpo, is reported as criticising the Russian authorities, saying: "I have understood that no one moves forward in the Russia border zone without Russia authorities being aware of it, I am disappointed" (Rosendahl et al. 2016, paragraph 3). This account is consistent with that offered by an interviewee, who articulated that:

> ….but at the end of 2015, we had 100s of those very [unusual] nationalities from two northern entry points between Finland and Russia, which was strange! That

might have been some hybrid project from the Russian authorities, but that is another issue. Still, hundreds of Indians, Iraqis, and Iranians came! Very [unusual] nationalities from those points of entry where those nationalities never travelled that route, which was strange indeed (Interview with IH 2020).

This claim indicates that the migrants became more knowledgeable and sophisticated in exploiting the vulnerability of the borders to achieve their aims. This significant movement gave the Finnish authorities the extra task of handling these groups of migrants. The situation also facilitated tensions between the authorities in Russia and Finland[9]. The Finnish authorities initially decided to try the hotspot approach there. However, due to the lack of facilities at those entry points, a different decision was made to transport the migrants to Lapland, Rovaniemi or other bigger cities where they registered for asylum applications (Interview with IH 2020).

As a result of the crisis, the EU and Finnish policymakers launched various interventions, measures and decisions to confront the dilemma, especially when it peaked. Van Middelaar (2020, p.30) posits that: "an unprecedented crisis demands a degree of authority and power to act beyond limited competencies and requires concentrated political responsibility". For instance, the hotspot approach was a crucial measure introduced at the EU level to register migrants quickly as they arrived at the EU's external borders (Interviews with TK and IH 2020; SS and SN 2021), which Finland also did at Tornio. Also, the FIS established a "situation centre to coordinate the accommodation needs in the autumn of 2015 after the accommodation needs increased to 150 per cent of demand" (EMN 2017, p.6). The Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior (2018, p.14) also noted that:

> A working group chaired by Kai Myykänen, the then Minister of Interior in Finland, was mandated to collate and update the arrivals and supervise the execution of the "national integration programme.

Although they claim the crisis was unexpected, the authorities believed they handled it relatively well. They, however, attributed this claim of their capability to the effective civil servant system in place in Finland and adherence to their existing strict national regulations. Civil servants were still obliged to do everything right because of the prevailing laws despite heated political debates and complex decision-making. The political decision-making apparatus also concentrated on making decisions and policies to bridge the gaps created by

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[9] Finland criticised Russia for allowing asylum seekers through the artic border, while Finland and Norway sought to ease the flow of Migrants from Russia during the crisis (Rosendahl et al. 2016, paragraph 1 and 2).

the crisis. The immigration governance authorities also learned many lessons in addressing the 2015-2016 immigration problem. One example was that the Finnish authorities believe they can handle a similar situation very well in the future. In this regard, the Finnish Government has already proposed preparing legislation and plans to cater for future occurrences (Interview with JT 2020). The EMN (2017, p.34-35) has also emphasised that:

> The situation in 2015-2016 and its experiences have been reviewed both nationally and regionally. The key development areas identified were related to information flow between authorities, the division of labour, and guidance from the central Government. Political leaders gained experience in cross-sectoral management. Cooperation among authorities operating under the Ministry of the Interior, the Police, the Finnish Border Guards, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, and the FIS has become even more efficient.

However, the recent Russian-Ukraine refugee crisis has reflected otherwise as Finnish authorities struggle to settle Ukrainian refugees. According to YLE News (5.5.2022, paragraph 4):

> The capacity of reception centres was severely reduced nationwide after the 2015-2016 refugee crisis from the Middle East subsided, but when Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, and people began to flee to Finland, new centres were quickly opened.

This statement contrasts the preparedness proclaimed by the evaluation carried out after the 2015-2016 crisis. Nevertheless, this implies that crisis management will vary depending on the magnitude and approach adopted. Each problem exhibits different characteristics and should be tackled in that respect.

6.3 Immigration Governance During the 2015-2016 Crisis

At its peak, the arrival of refugees and asylum-seekers in 2015 had many ramifications for MLG interactions and the measures required to address the issues and needs of the arrivals (OECD 2018). The lack of harmonisation of asylum legislation of the EU Member States contributed significantly to the crisis (Niemann and Zaun 2018). The immigration governance authorities acknowledged the intensification of events unfolding and needed swift decisions and policies to help improve the situation. For example, as the custodian of the Schengen system and, therefore, the CEAS, the EU level was expected to lead in solving this transnational migration challenge. As discussed above, the Member State authorities criticised the EU for its inability to offer the anticipated leadership and solutions. It is

relevant to note that the EU-level institutions are limited and cautious about how much intervention or influence they can exert on the policies and decisions of the Member States (Collet and Le Coz 2018). This statement indicates a limitation of the applicability of the MLG concept in practice since the supranational level exists only as a co-producer of decisions. It also shows that governance at the supranational level is beyond the state (authorities interacting at this level to make decisions and policies) and not above it (the Member States have the final implementation authority). Therefore, the MLG paradigm does not practically manifest all its supposed features but instead showcases some limitations, such as authorities lacking influence once decisions are made. The European Commission (2020, p.2), however, maintains that a comprehensive approach to immigration governance would create "faster, seamless migration processes and stronger governance of migration policies" and "reduce unsafe and irregular routes and promote sustainable and safe legal pathways for those in need of protection". It will also bridge the current implementation gap and improve trust in EU policies (De Wenden 2021).

Also, during this period, it became evident that some asylum-seekers and refugees applied in some cities in Finland, which was previously uncommon for people to use for asylum (Interview with IH 2020). Later, it became apparent that many of the so-called asylum-seekers and refugees came for diverse reasons, not necessarily needing international protection or refuge. Instead, they were primarily economic migrants who used the crisis as an opportunity to migrate illegally (Interviews with IH and JT 2020). This discovery made the authorities introduce strict measures in determining who requires asylum or refuge (Interview with IH 2020). This change also illustrates decision-making and implementation in a crisis where the situation demands immediate altering of policies or rules to reflect the situation. For instance, the FIS suspended decision-making concerning Iraqi and Somali asylum-seekers and stopped granting international protection to them because they came from a particular area of their country of origin. The FIS also halted the decision-making concerning Afghans until the assessment criteria and guidelines were updated[10] (EMN 2017, p.7). These actions by the authorities seemed harsh and inconsiderate on humanitarian grounds because of Finland's democratic reputation within the EU and the international community. For example, Wahlbeck (2019b, as seen in Vanto et al. 2021, p.6) showed that;

> Finland has long supported international cooperation in refugee protection.
> However, during the perceived crisis in the Autumn of 2015, Finland was reluctant

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[10] Some further proposed actions are verifiable from the timeline activities in Table 2.

to support EU-wide approaches to asylum policies, seeming to pursue national strategies instead.

This evidence demonstrates the complexity of the MLG relationship during a crisis. Opting for national strategies at the time of the crisis indicates that certain occurrences can alter MLG's framework to reflect the situation at hand. For instance, Wahlbeck (2019b) argued that many EU Member States did not fulfil their international and legal obligations during the crisis. This approach of seeking national level solutions and neglecting international responsibilities and legal obligations disregarded the nuanced dynamics of authority with the MLG framework, which is one of its strengths. The MLG concept, however, supports the crosscutting impact of the decisions and actions made on a particular level to all the other levels. This argument implies that MLG's applicability during a crisis still holds, as Spencer (2018) contended, that MLG as a term could be deployed for relationships, whether efficient or not. Constructivists thus assert that the realities in international politics are not merely a reflection of an objective, material existence; instead, they are products of an intersubjective or social reality. In essence, the actions of actors in international relations, the interests they pursue, and the frameworks in which they function are shaped by social norms and ideas rather than being solely dictated by objective and material circumstances (Barkin 2003). The implications is that the approach of only looking for solutions within a single country's borders while ignoring international responsibilities and legal obligations overlooks the complex relationships of power within the MLG framework, as argued by social constructivists. This contention is because the framework involves various levels of government working together, and understanding and observing these dynamics is crucial for its effectiveness.

Finnish Politicians in government and opposition, crucial decision-makers, and other actors between the EU and Finland were actively engaged in addressing the crisis, which indicates a collaborative and engaged approach from various political and decision-making entities in Finland in response to the situation. There were, however, political tensions between the parties that formed the Government, as mentioned above. It is crucial to note that three different political parties (the Finns Party, the Agrarian Centre Party and the Conservative National Coalition Party, as seen in Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck 2018) formed the coalition government in Finland, which made agreements on decisions, policies and approaches to adapt and collaborate with the EU to resolve the crisis more challenging. As briefly stated at the beginning of this chapter, the particular case of Finland was that during the crisis, the major opposition party which became part of the coalition government was anti-immigrant

and anti-EU in their policies and approaches, which made Finland's dealing with the EU more difficult. Heino and Jauhiainen (2020) echoed this claim that the success of the True Finns Party had influenced discussions regarding immigration in municipalities and their Councils. Prudent measures were thus required to appease the members of the coalition government to maintain the continuity of the coalition. Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck (2018, p.8) remarked that:

> The Finns Party included a vociferous so-called "immigration critical" faction, and the Party had capitalised on an explicit nationalist and Eurosceptic rhetoric already in the 2011 parliamentary elections.

The assertion above suggests that certain political events that preceded the crisis were used as background drivers during the crisis to signal messages that the situation was preventable. At the EU level, the confrontational style of heated debates was attributed to the rise in influence of populists in countries in top asylum-receiving countries like Germany, Austria and Sweden and the fact that the Visegrád countries politicised the issue (Niemann and Zaun 2018). Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the then Finns Party leader echoed the importance of domestic solutions to immigration. The Finns Party was very critical of Finland's connection with the EU in resolving the crisis, especially in availing resources and power to the EU level. This criticism manifested when Finland abstained from voting on the relocation policy at the EU level, as contended earlier. However, they participated in implementing the outcomes by accepting the proposed quorum (Wahlbeck 2019b). This assertion suggests that collective actions neglect the complexities of domestic preference formation and EU negotiation processes. These processes usually aim to clarify the interconnections between these elements and emphasise the influence of power differentials among Member States on the legislative outcomes of the EU (Neimann and Zaun 2018).

Again, daily discussions and information flow among the authorities governing immigration increased during the crisis because they needed to update themselves regularly on the circumstances on the ground, measures to be taken, and how to influence the decisions (Interview with RK 2020). This assertion supports the claim of EMN (2018) that strategically distributing documents and communications concerning decisions enhanced transparency and the public's understanding of the ongoing crisis.

Table 2 Timeline of key events during the 2015-2016 'migration crisis' in Finland

DATES	EVENTS/RESPONSES
29th May 2015	Government launches the 'Government Programme to Manage Immigration'.
Summer-2015	Accommodation in all reception centres increased.
July-August 2015	Asylum applications by Albanians increased and they were found to be clearly unsubstantiated.
4th September 2015	Crisis management group formed.
11th September 2015	Government published migration policies.
17th September 2015	Government decides to register all asylum-seekers at registration centres.
22nd September 2015	-Registration Centre opened in Tornio at Government's decision. - The Finnish Immigration Service established a Situation Centre to report on happenings on the ground.
22nd September 2015- 29th February 2016	Registration centres operated across Finland with over 16,000 asylum-seekers registered.
24th September 2015	The Finnish Ministry of the Interior (MoI) established a working group on immigration.
September 2015	The Finish Immigration Service suspended decision-making on Iraqi and Somali Asylum-seekers.
October 2015	Iraqi and Somali asylum-seekers are not granted international protection anyhow (without considering the internal flight option).
November 2015	-The Finnish Immigration Service suspended decision-making on Afghanistan asylum-seekers. - The MoI set up a project to review International Protection Residence Permit. - The Police and the Finnish Immigration Service adopted an operating model.
2nd November 2015- 31st January 2016	The Finnish Ministry of the Interior undertook a project to review the criteria for residence permits on international protection.
27th November 2015	Ministerial working group on migration approved action plan.
8th December 2015	Government published Action Plan on managing the crisis.
December 2015	The Finnish Immigration Service updated the security situation in Afghanistan.
2015	The Finnish Police investigated nearly 28,000 asylum-seekers applications.
Beginning of 2016	A temporary transit centre for returns was established near Helsinki-Vantaa airport.
10th February – 31 December 2016	The Finnish Ministry of the Interior established a working group to review the asylum process.
March 2016	Asylum-seekers dropped to the previous year's level.
April 2016	Electronic processing of asylum applications commenced.
May 2016	-A new assessment of the security situation in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia took place. - Responsibility of serving positive decisions on asylum applications transferred from the Police to the Finnish Immigration Service.
16th May 2016	International Humanitarian protection as a residence permit category was removed from the Aliens Act.
1st June 2016	The Finnish Ministry of the Interior launched a project to assess Finland's capacity to receive asylum seekers in the future.
September 2016	Asylum-seekers' rights changed, the appeal period was shortened, and access to state-funded legal aid was restricted.
October 2016	Joint declaration on cooperation between Finland and Afghanistan signed.
December 2016	Act on the Reception of applying for International Protection amended.

Source: Author's Construct (2020).

Since Finland received tenfold more asylum-seekers and refugees during the crisis than its usual annual intake, the authorities acknowledged the magnitude of the situation and cooperated meaningfully in resolving the dilemma. This collaboration at the national level was described by one of the interviewees as follows:

> What we did at that time was that we intensified cooperation among the relevant authorities. [There was also] a very strong coordination from the Ministry of the Interior. So we were doing a lot at the practical and operational level so that all information exchanges and cooperation between different authorities were done as that from mere possible. [Therefore] that is one significant remark for that period [2015-2016], that we could work together with all authorities[closely], and in that way, we managed the [migration crisis] quite well in Finland (Interview with TK 2020).

The officials made significant decisions at the operational and policymaking levels during the crisis. As described above, such decisions were made quickly by relying on and amending existing policies and regulations and introducing new ones, mainly at the national level (EMN 2018). As emphasised earlier, it suggests that decision-making during emergencies needs to proceed faster than regularly, no matter the number of actors and levels involved. For instance, Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.29) highlight that:

> [several] EU and national policymakers expressed concern that the Commission remained unaware of the gravity of the situation until late September or even early October 2015, compelling Member States to develop their own national and regional responses.

Also, instead of relying entirely on policies, a situation-driven strategy was adopted to address the crisis. This approach exemplifies how human autonomy and urgent needs activate the role of proactive measures in a crisis. In some cases, cities and civil society actors provided services traditionally performed by national level actors (Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk 2019). It also shows a manifestation of a bottom-up approach as a supportive mechanism for top-down regulatory systems. Van Middelaar (2020) argued that policies generally fail during unprecedented situations, and if society must function effectively and restore order, the human agentic capability must take precedence. Hence, this study shows that some legislation on migration in Finland has been unused before the crisis (Interview with KR 2022). These legislative tools were thus available, coupled with new ones, to facilitate the approaches adopted in handling the situation. An interviewee explained that:

> Yes! We did not make many crucial changes in our legislation. However, we created some new ways to work during the crisis in 2015. We have/had a joint working group called the "Illegal Immigration Working Group". This group comprises representatives from several Ministries and agencies; - the Border Guards, Customs and Police, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Social and Health, which meets every third month (Interview with IH 2020).

The claim above shows that the authorities did not make crucial changes during the crisis. However, EMN (2018, p.11) indicated that the Member States introduced essential changes in their official organisations, contrary to the interviewee's assertion above. Also, looking at Table 2 above, it is evident that several changes were introduced in Finland, which contradicts the interviewee's response. For instance, in Finland, the establishment of identity and routes travelled within the asylum process was transferred from the Finnish Police and FBG to the FIS. Also, "a new operating model was introduced; thus, the FIS's Senior Adviser, together with the Police, screened asylum applications at the Police departments after they filed them" (EMN 2017, p.10). This model differed from regular decision-making concerning the asylum process, facilitating the rather lengthy and bureaucratic process that existed before the crisis in Finland. There was also the need to instantly form a robust coordinating body at the ministerial level, which assured the operational authorities that they had the full support of the policymakers (Interview with TK 2020). Therefore, the national level schemes and decisions implemented responded faster to the crisis, and new measures were introduced, contrary to the claim by the interviewee.

An interviewee claimed that the Finnish authorities also suggested focusing on crisis resolution measures in the Mediterranean countries and other first entry points into the EU (Interview with TK 2020). This assertion indicates that much attention was devoted to resolving the crisis at the expense of other forms of immigration. This claim is consistent with Wolff's (2020, p.246) argument that the EU neglected legal migration during this period and instead focused its efforts on finding ways of dealing with irregular migration, border management, and asylum-seeking. The diversion of attention from the other form(s) of immigration to concentrate resources and efforts on the crisis should have ideally yielded better results, but the findings suggest otherwise. For example, Finland expressed concerns about how some migrants drove through other countries to reach their intended destinations in the far north (Interview with TK 2020), creating unwarranted pressure on the Finnish State to deal with the problem. For instance, the arrivals of Iraqis and Afghans into Finland continued until Sweden introduced border controls on its border with Denmark on November 12, 2015 (Wahlbeck 2019b).

During this crisis, the EU's Commission proposed new legislation to help ease the ongoing crisis. As explained above, the solution introduced was the European Agenda on Migration, which many (including the interviewees) criticised for not adequately supporting the Member States' efforts. Most interviewees expressed similar sentiments on the EU's failure during the crisis. For instance, two interviewees said:

> We think the EU failed to renew its system at that time. As you may be aware, on 23 September 2020, the European Union presented its new act on migration and asylum, and that is a new trial to get things on before the next crisis. So, I think the European Union failed, but nationally, we did handle it well. (Interview with RK and TK 2020).

These interviewees believed that national efforts exceeded the EU-level ones. This claim is somewhat controversial because the Member States have always been reluctant to give up critical aspects of their immigration governance to the EU. Wolff (2020, p.242) expressed a similar sentiment in her analysis of the 2015-2016 crisis that the EU appeared to many as a weaker actor during the crisis because, to some, it was "unable to prevent migration flows and to others, unable to rescue and provide decent conditions to the migrants and refugees". The EU's citizens expected much from the EU in handling the crisis, similar to national level politicians and actors. Consistent with this argument, the interviewees quoted above expressed how the EU, in September 2020, presented a new Act on migration and asylum in preparation for handling a similar crisis in the future (Interview with RK and TK 2020). Taking a different stance, however, Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.1) argued that:

> There is no perfect crisis management system. Whether faced with natural disasters, political upheaval or mass migration, governments must make difficult choices in mobilising and allocating resources and delineating and assigning responsibilities- all in a high-pressure environment.

There is a high tendency to agree with the assertion above because, even if there are established measures or policies to manage crises, every situation will vary and demand different approaches. Two distinct problems will not be of the same magnitude and impact. Preparedness for an emergency can be significant, although it may not serve the primary purpose for which they were developed. According to Van Middelaar (2020, p.40), "breaking the rules could actually equate to being true to the contract in an emergency situation".

These arguments support the perceived unsuccessful attempt by the EU to handle the 2015-2016 crisis by the Member States' governance authorities, as discussed above because the expectation of the Member States and their citizens was for the EU to provide the necessary leadership and tools that would have helped resolve the issue at the supranational level. Although the European Agenda on Migration was a timely intervention, it remains unclear why the EU waited until 2015 to introduce such measures. It was too late to address the inconsistencies, disunity, lack of solidarity, and disagreements among the Member States substantially during the crisis (European Commission 2020). As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the European Agenda on Migration guided the EU's response to the immediate challenges. This agenda, however, did not fully achieve sustainable management of immigration as it is generally known and expressed by all the interviewees. For instance, Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.4) noted that the EU and the Member States struggled to contain the situation in all aspects, from "border controls to humanitarian aid". It is, therefore, unsurprising that the Finnish Government (2021, pp.8-9) advocated the "fostering of EU's internal unity" and strengthening of its "external capacity" in diverse ways. However, Niemann and Zaun (2018) argued that the EU's response to the crisis was more comprehensive than is commonly perceived, which instigates further research on the specific approaches offered by the EU to influence Member States' decisions regarding the crisis.

Meanwhile, the politicisation of the situation at all the governance levels intensified. The reactions from the EU were, at best, described as a typical case of bureaucratic inertia, with most of the responsibility laid on the shoulders of the individual Member States (Interviews with RK, JT and HN 2020). In Finland, for instance, they had to resort to more practical operational-level decisions, existing legislative instruments and intensified cooperation among the authorities to resolve the crisis. This argument suggests that policies and rules can sometimes become impractical to implement in dire situations (Van Middelaar 2020). National systems and policies must, therefore, empower local authorities to act during emergencies, reflecting a functional MLG relationship. Faberi's (2018) argument that cooperation among many stakeholders depends on communication techniques to achieve a common goal supports this contention supports this stance. An interviewee also argued that decision-making during an emergency is usually concentrated more at the operational level. The interviewee claimed that:

> In a crisis, […] the decision-making goes to the lower level, which is more operational at the Adhoc level. We were fortunate that our structures [enabled us to] do [things correctly] (Interview with HN 2020).

Another interviewee holding a similar view intimated that:

> The timeline was quick and strict in every aspect. In such cases, the role of the authorities like the Border Guard, MIGRI (FIS), Police and even the Military, which gave some aid, increases. Therefore, the role of politicians, especially in Parliament, is less in that type of situation because Parliament is more like a long-term decision-maker and not an operational decision-maker (Interview with JA 2021).

Although the national and local level actors were active during the crisis, there remains the issue of how much power and competencies the EU possesses in handling the immigration problems of the entire Member States without taking over their sovereignty. As described above, this uncertainty is one reason the EU played a subtle role in resolving the crisis. This argument also counters the active participation of all relevant actors within the MLG framework, but Bucken-Knapp et al. (2018) argued that there must be at least two levels for MLG to take place. That is why many questioned the political leadership of the EU during the crisis, as the measures proposed by the Commission were insignificant (Interviews with RK, TK 2020; JA, SS 2021).

Discussions on the way forward were ongoing at the EU level regarding how to support those countries encountering more significant impacts of the crisis. For instance, there were concerns about the increasing number of asylum-seekers in countries like Germany, Austria and Sweden and those in the southern parts of Europe. An interviewee elaborated that:

> All of them entered Europe via Italy and Greece. Then they travelled across Europe and finally to Sweden. Indeed, the majority of them stayed in Germany, Denmark or Sweden. Still, during the 2015 crisis, Finland received more than 30,000 applications, which is an enormous number compared to our normal situation (Interview with IH 2020).

Although the mentioned countries experienced a rise in asylum-seekers, Finland received a significant number during this period. This figure, compared to the usual annual intake, was deemed substantial due to the unexpectedly high increases. However, when the numbers started reducing after the peak of the crisis, Finland and some other Member States experiencing low applications took certain decisions. Measures like reducing the number of reception centres and relocating staff to places where they were relevant (EMN 2018) were taken in Finland. This reduction in the number of asylum-seekers also paved the way for

authorities to divert attention to other fields of migration, like deportation and integration measures.

Again, during the crisis, the EU and the Member States decided to relocate migrants from those countries (especially Italy and Greece) according to the solidarity and burden-sharing principle, the implementation of which eventually was unsuccessful (Geddes and Scholten 2016). The Member States could not agree on the quota system during the Council of The EU's meetings to find solutions to the crisis. According to Collet and Le Coz (2018, p.16), the relocation changed the political discussions regarding managing the crisis, further deepening the divisions (Wolff 2020) between the Member States on responsibility for asylum claims. In that regard, a statement issued by the European Commission in 2015 regarding the implementation of this decision stated that:

> Given the exceptional, urgent and temporary nature of the [d]ecision and the Council agreeing to relocate the proposed figure of 40 000 persons in clear need of protection, the Commission will not object to the deletion of the distribution key from the [d]ecision. The Commission notes that the [d]ecision adopted by the Council does not retain the mandatory distribution of applicants in clear need of international protection between [the] Member States as proposed by the initial Commission proposal and endorsed by the European Parliament. The Commission underlines that according to Article 4 of the [d]ecision, 40 000 persons in need of international protection shall be relocated from Italy and Greece to the territory of the other Member States. The Commission calls on all the Member States to contribute [by] complying with this objective as soon as possible. This position is without prejudice to the Commission's proposal for a Council Decision establishing additional measures for relocation (COM(2015) 451) (Council of the European Union 2015a, p.5).

The declaration above indicates an effort at the EU level to resolve the crisis in 2015. However, the Commission's report provided an apparent loophole that the Member States used to reject the implementation[11]. The relocation was voluntary; hence, those Member States who found it necessary to help did while others remained unconcerned, leading to its non-fulfilment (Doomernik and Glorius 2016; European Court of Auditors 2019; Ponzo 2022; Panebianco 2022). Also, according to Heiman et al. (2019), another reason for this unsuccessful policy implementation is that the Member States lack a shared goal in their divergent perspectives regarding solidarity and assessments of the magnitude of the crisis. For example, De Wenden (2021, p.1) contended that, despite EU States' agreement on tighter border controls and deportation to countries of origin and transit, the case for

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[11] At the same time, the EU cannot force the Member States into accepting such proposals.

solidarity is contested highly. This argument is also evident in the opinions of other scholars (Panebianco 2022, p.1404; Ponzo 2022, p.40) that "the governments of the so-called Visegrád countries announced that they did not intend to comply with the relocation scheme and refused to accept the number of assigned migrants". As argued in this study, working in such complex, sensitive, volatile, and dynamic relationships is both challenging and problematic. For instance, Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.28) remarked that:

> To be effective on the ground, national governments relied on the assistance of operational actors, from the EU agencies (notable FRONTEX, EUROPOL, and EASO) through to international organisations and NGOs (e.g. UNCHR, IOM, and the International Committee of the Red Cross). [Therefore], bringing these actors to respond [coherently] constituted a significant challenge as many had not worked together [before] the crisis.

The excerpt above reflects the MLG concept's practicality during a crisis. Different actors with a common goal of responding to an emergency collaborated. They came from different levels of governance and had to cooperate to resolve a crisis. The complexity involved in this case is such that they have not worked together before, and in times of crisis, decision-making proceeds at a faster pace than in everyday situations, as argued earlier. This contention suggests that without proper coordination of actors in an emergency, the challenges of MLG relationships can escalate, resulting in implementation failure (Joki and Wolffhardt 2017). Finland is a typical case of proper organisation and coordination of actors from diverse levels of interaction both regularly and in a crisis (Interviews with RK, TK IH, JL and HN 2020).

The EU and the Member States have since enhanced migration and asylum policy cooperation. They want to see more responsibility-sharing and solidarity with one another, an instance depicted in the more recent situation in the Monia Reception Centre (European Commission 2020). Also, the recently introduced New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum details issues about collaboration. This new pact aims to facilitate sustainable solutions on solidarity[12] and fair sharing of responsibility among the Member States. It sets out a new comprehensive approach to migration that combines all crucial policy strands to enable a prolonged sustainable system within the EU for managing migration and asylum (European Commission 2021a).

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[12] Solidarity implies that all Member States should contribute as clarified by the European Court of Justice (European Commission 2020, p.5).

As discussed earlier, during the 2015-2016 crisis, the EU level introduced the European Agenda on Migration. Similarly, the national level in Finland created the 'Government Programme to Manage Migration' in reaction to the supposed ineffective leadership of the EU during the crisis. For instance, border management contributed significantly to the overall governance of immigration. Wahlbeck (2019a, p.310) noted that:

> As is well known, 2015 can be characterised as the year when national border controls were re-introduced, and the future of the Schengen agreement on free movement became uncertain. In Finland, the arrival of large numbers of asylum-seekers across the border from Sweden also fueled public debates about border controls.

However, it should be noted that although Finland did not introduce physical border controls on the Schengen side, there were increased random patrols and searches on foreigners. For instance, the Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior (2018) established that the Finnish Border Guards associated the sharp increase in the number of illegal entries in 2015-2016 with the aggravated situation at the Mediterranean EU Borders and the irregular Artic migration route through the Finnish-Russian Border. These and many other events occurred during the crisis. In the following sub-section, the analysis is on governance and significant events arising after the crisis relative to what was before the crisis.

6.4   After the 2015-2016 Migration Crisis

Following the 2015-2016 migration crisis, migration has become a key theme and policy instrument for the EU because of the increasing number of refugees, irregular migrants, and asylum-seekers and the need for educated labour by the Member States (Finnish Ministry of the Interior 2018). Many migrants still use irregular and unsafe routes to reach Europe's shores. For instance, between January and November 2020, over 110,000 people came to Europe through dangerous and irregular means (European Commission 2021, p.2). Meanwhile, in 2019, some countries such as Cyprus, France, Greece, Malta and Spain received more asylum applications than during the 2015-2016 migration crisis (EASO Asylum Report 2020, p.13). These figures show a possible imminent migration crisis in the EU, similar to the 2015-2016 crisis.

In the aftermath of the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the politicisation of various immigration-related issues in the mainstream media and parliamentary debates in Finland was linked to the question of responsibility (Wahlbeck 2019a). For instance, Wahlbeck (2019a)

emphasised that newspaper articles in Finland typically reported that the leading causes of the crisis were the opposing positions among the Member States and the absence of solidarity at the EU level to implement the measures adopted for distributing and relocating asylum-seekers. The preferences of a Member State to control migration at the national level show their lack of commitment to international cooperation and EU-wide solutions regarding migration and asylum policies (Wahlbeck 2019b) within the MLG framework. Such a phenomenon shows the complexity and dynamism (Zapata-Barrero et al. 2017) in interacting during the MLG of immigration, in that sovereignty is pitched against solidarity and collaboration in a relationship that is supposed to fuse authorities so that the lines of authorities are blurred. However, constructivists underscore the significance of this phenomenon of multilevel interactions, suggesting that one might anticipate constructivists, given their "mutually constitutive ontology", to prioritise processes and social interactions, in which preferences are inherently linked with the latter (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001, p.220). Contrary to expectations, however, this has not been the case, particularly within mainstream constructivist discourse. That is, the desire of some Member States to control migration at the national level indicates concerns about national sovereignty and the challenges of ceding control to the supranational level. The EU's goal of producing a cohesive migration and asylum policy is thus complicated by the disparities in commitment and cooperation from its Member States. The analysis suggests a need for constructivists within the mainstream constructivist discourse to better account for the dynamics of MLG and the interplay between national preferences and supranational cooperation.

Apart from irregular immigrants, there is also the acknowledgement that most EU Member States will need migrants to balance the sustainability gap due to their aged population. For these reasons, the EU strives to update its current rules and improve the Union's ability to attract and retain skilled migrants from third countries (Finnish Ministry of Interior 2018) while simultaneously controlling irregular migrants. For example, the European Council (2021a) has proposed eight action plans to prevent the loss of life and pressures on the borders of the EU. These action plans follow EU and international law and affect the countries of origin and transits of migrants. The need for these action plans indicates that the EU and the Member States are constantly faced with the challenges of immigration governance even after the 2015-2016 migration crisis. Therefore, the European Council expects the implementation of its action plans by the Member States, backed by time and financial resources, to prevent the loss of lives similar to the situation in 2015-2016 and protect the EU's boundaries well. For example, since 2015, the EU has successfully

supported the resettlement of more than 98,000 of the most vulnerable people in need of international protection to find shelter in the EU (European Council 2022).

The EU continues its efforts to harmonise the criteria and procedures of entry into its territory. According to Barslund et al. (2019, p.15), the attempts to improve cooperation among the Member States regarding asylum and other migration-related policies in the past have failed and are unlikely to be successful. Similarly, De Wenden (2021, p.4) argues that the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum introduced by the European Commission in 2020 does not seem to be an efficient tool, and the lack of standard asylum policy is also absent. This study contends that considering the various arguments, bargains and trade-offs among the Member States, the lack of commitments to solidarity measures and the absence of a comprehensive approach, the EU has a difficult task of maintaining a stable and concrete solution to immigration at the supranational level. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the EU introduced a New Pact following the end of the European Agenda on migration in 2015-2016, which is already being regarded as an ineffective tool for EU-wide solutions by some Member States.

Nevertheless, the recently introduced 'New Pact on Migration and Asylum' in response to the European Agenda on Migration's failure focuses on a holistic approach. It underscores how relevant a "comprehensive, balanced, tailor-made and mutually beneficial migration partnership" (European Commission 2021, p.1) is to the EU and the Member States in governing immigration, especially regarding repatriation. The Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs now focuses on long-term solutions that will equip Europe with future-proof means of managing migration responsibly and moderately (Interview with SS 2021). Similarly, according to the European Commission (2020, p.1):

> A new, durable European framework is needed to manage the interdependence between Member States' policies and decisions and to offer a proper response to the opportunities and challenges in regular times, in situations of pressure and crises; one that can provide certainty, clarity and decent conditions for the immigrants arriving in the EU, and that can also allow Europeans to trust that migration is managed effectively and humanely, entirely in line with our values.

This suggestion by the European Commission is evidence of the future policies needed to govern immigration regularly and in crisis, but whether it materialises will depend on the Member States' unanimity and shared interests. As Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.6) argue, the usual contested issue remains that "there are limits to how and how far the EU institutions

can directly interfere in what is essentially a sovereign domain, even when these impacts cross borders". For instance, some Member States' decisions and policy changes directly affected neighbouring countries during the 2015-2016 crisis, with the EU having no particular influence (EMN 2018, p.16). In Finland, for example, the strict legislative amendments in Sweden in 2015, like temporary residence permits and austerer family reunification criteria (Wahlbeck 2019b), directly increased the number of asylum-seekers received at the various reception centres. Similarly, during the same period, Slovakia experienced increased pressure on its reception capacity after Hungary postponed the transfer of international migrants according to the Dublin regulations (EMN 2018, p.16). Consequently, the European Commission (2021, p.1) has suggested establishing a shared sustainable European framework that enables consistency, certainty and clarity.

Meanwhile, the temporary emergency relocation programme of the EU, established in two Council of the EU Decisions in 2015 to relocate 160,000 asylum-seekers from Italy and Greece, ended in 2017 (European Court of Auditors 2019). Finland played a very active role in this relocation by relocating 1,981[13] asylum-seekers under the scheme, the last of which arrived in Finland in December 2017 (Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior 2018). As emphasised in this thesis, although Finland's attitude toward EU activities appears optimistic, Finland's interest arises from the awareness of its long borders with Russia. This long external EU border with Russia, if encroached upon massively, on a scale similar to that in 2015-2016 at the Mediterranean borders, will lead Finland to demand solidarity from the other EU Member States. For instance, Finland has recently begun erecting fences on its land borders with Russia (Kanal13 2023), which supports this argument. An interviewee who emphasised this same position claimed that:

> We share a very long border with Russia, so we are responsible for quite a significant share of the EU's external border. While this is a minor worry [at the moment] that the border can become a challenging surprise at a specific time, typically, there is no problem! I mean [there] may be some worry in the backs of our heads that if Russia will do something surprising or challenging, then we would like to see the EU show solidarity and help us in a situation like that. So, that is just one of the reasons why we would like to see synchronised solid European immigration policies (Interviewee with JA 2021).

According to the interviewee, despite not being threatened, Finland wants to see more harmonised and unanimous EU policies on immigration. The authorities believe combining

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[13] 1,202 persons from Greece and 779 from Italy.

resources constructively at the EU level can yield better results than going solo and expending more resources. The emphasis here is on highlighting the importance of neighbouring states with geographical proximity aligning and coordinating their individual migration frameworks, policies, and practices. This association should depend on common social, economic, political, and cultural systems, as well as shared identity and interests (Iwuoha and Mbaegbu 2021). For instance, Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck (2018, p.23) noted that Finland called for the harmonisation of migration practices in line with other Nordic countries and the rest of Europe so that Finland would not be seen as attractive compared to the other EU countries. This contention supports Kooiman's (2003) argument that no single actor has all it takes to act unilaterally. Hence, helping the different EU Member States under the principle of solidarity and burden sharing is a crucial position for Finland regarding EU policy decision-making and implementation regarding immigration governance. Finland demonstrated this position during the migration crisis in 2015-2016, as argued in this case study, and still does so through its commitment to the EU's activities. It is also crucial that the EU involves partner countries (countries of origin and transits), the UN, the African Union and other actors if it wants to be progressive in tackling the root causes of migration and breaking the criminal networks involved (Council of the EU Press Release 13 May 2015).

6.5   Deporting Asylum-Seekers and Refugees

Migration policymaking occurs within institutional settings where policy objectives do not continually transform into the expected results (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Ambrosini 2018). One reason for this is that between policy objectives formulation and implementation lies the critical processes of decision-making where divergent opinions and conflicting ideologies influence the dynamics. Deportation of TCNs from the EU to their countries of origin is a typical case of policy decision-making and implementation where objectives do not always translate into intended outcomes. For instance, "democratic values enshrined in international conventions and national constitutions prevent the execution of harsher policies" (Ambrosini 2018, p.131). In this sub-section, the analysis focuses on how policy decision-making and implementation regarding deportation orders occur.

The 'Return Directive'[14] sets the rules and conditions for deporting unlawful staying individuals who are non-EU nationals to their country of origin (Interview with SS 2021; European Court of Auditors 2021). The EU Member States are required to integrate this directive into their legal frameworks, allowing for a considerable "degree of flexibility and discretion" on the part of each Member State (Servent 2011, p.11). This flexibility is because it is a directive and not a regulation that binds the Member States. The European Commission (2020, p.3) has expressed worries that the "inconsistencies between national asylum and return systems, as well as implementation, have exposed inefficiencies and raised concerns about fairness". According to the European Court of Auditors (2021, p.7), the "inefficiencies of the EU return systems act as an incentive for irregular migration". Nevertheless, it is one of the policy areas of migration governance within which the EU has some level of harmonisation of the Member States' policy and that of the EU, similar to the free movement of citizens' directives (Servent 2011). It is also important to note that it is a directive; hence, Member States must transpose it according to their national interest. As emphasised by the European Court of Auditors (2021, p.8), "the return process is mainly in the hands of national authorities". Thus, the European Commission (2020, p.6) has highlighted that:

> A structured process would offer EU help so that Member States could assist one another in building resilient, effective and flexible systems with national strategies integrating asylum and return policies at the national level.

In line with that argument, the European Council (2021b, p.6) reiterated the importance of ensuring adequate returns and implementing readmission "using the necessary leverage". These leverages include all crucial EU policies, including policies (trade and visa) and tools, which enable the complete implementation of existing readmission agreements and the conclusion of new ones (European Council 2021b). In addition, the European Commission's (2021b, p.1) declaration emphasised that:

> A fair and effective system needs to guarantee quick protection and integration of those in need of international protection and, at the same time, provide for the

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[14] DIRECTIVE 2008/115/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals. "Based on Article 63.3.b of the Treaty of European Community (TEC) (now Article 79.2c of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)), the directive is framed as an instrument to deal with the after-effects of irregular immigration" (Servent 2011, p.9).

effective return and sustainable reintegration in their countries of origin of those who do not have the right to stay.

The deportation process seems a less complicated task in principle, but it is practically challenging, with several reasons accounting for this complexity. For instance, the findings from this research revealed that, although most countries are signatories to the international law that obliges them to take back their nationals, practically, they are reluctant to do so (European Court of Auditors 2021). Sometimes, this hesitation is because establishing the deportee's country of origin can be tricky, and they could also be stateless. At the same time, the destination countries are primarily unwilling to issue papers or documents if they contest the origin of the deportee (Interview with JL 2020).

The EU has comparatively better bargaining power with third countries than the individual Member States; hence, it issues directives that the Member States follow (Interview with SS 2021). Also, according to the EU's Treaty of Lisbon, readmission and associated negotiations are the competencies of the supranational level (Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior 2018; Cassarino 2010). For instance, in its meeting on 16 December 2021, the European Council (2021b, p.6) requested the Council and the Commission to:

> Consider ways to strengthen cooperation arrangements to support Member States facing specific challenges at the EU's external borders, including [border guards and] aerial surveillance (Conclusion 19).

These arguments indicate that if the EU is dealing with or negotiating such agreements with third countries, it possesses much more influence than when an individual Member State is doing the same. An interviewee from the European Commission expressed it this way:

> So, the influence of an individual Member State in negotiating power vis-à-vis a third country that is not cooperative in readmitting their nationals is small, but if you come as the EU, you have a more significant bargaining potential (Interview with SS 2021).

However, the "success of returns, readmission and reintegration" demands a united front between the EU and its Member States (European Commission 2021a). The European Court of Auditors (2021, p.7) estimated that since 2008, an average of 500 000 TCNs are authorised to leave the EU annually because they lack the proper documentation to stay legally.

The EU also plays functional roles, for instance, in organising joint flights for the deportees. The EU performs this through its agency Frontex, which is mandated to manage these deportation flights (Ekelund 2014). Figure 5 below depicts the deportation process. It commences with the registration and documentation in the deporting country and ends in the country of return (country of origin and transits). Chartering flights by individual Member States can be expensive to bear exclusively. Therefore, Frontex can organise these deportation flights jointly to reduce the cost and burden for the Member States (Interviews with IH 2020 and SS 2021).

Figure 5 The return process step-by-step
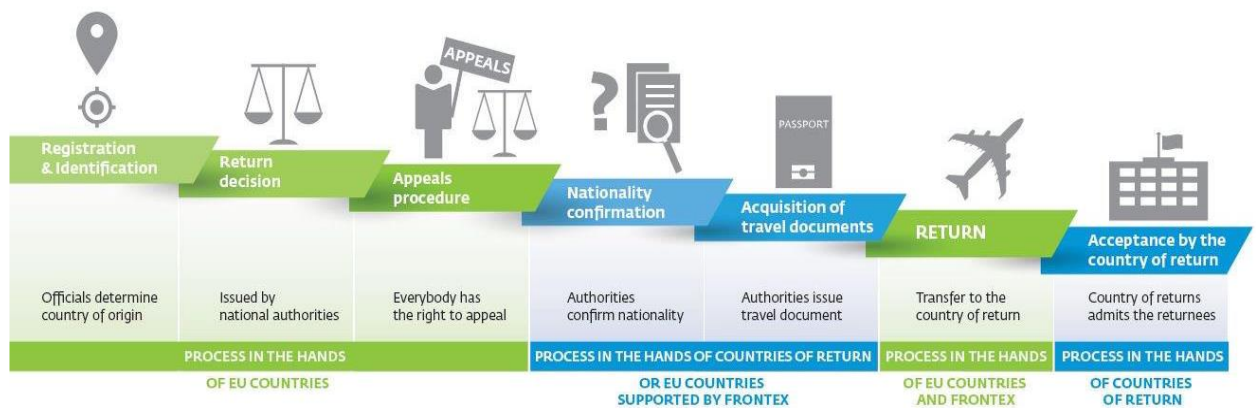
Source: DG- HOMES (2020) Picture by Frontex

The deportation process also reflects the dynamics at play within the MLG framework. For instance, in Finland, if the immigration service denies an applicant's asylum or residence permit application, the local level (the city) will not offer legal residence to such a person. The person thus becomes an illegal resident in the country, either awaiting an appeal or absconding. However, in deporting a person, the national level immigration governance actors like the Border Guards or Police may choose to or are frequently encouraged by the EU to collaborate with Frontex to organise joint returns (European Court of Auditors 2019, p.9). The EU favours a joint comprehensive approach that can influence constructive immigration governance. For instance, the European Commission (2021a, p.1) emphasised that:

> Building a common EU system for returns based on stronger, effective and humane return procedures inside the EU, as well as more effective cooperation with

external partners on readmission, is one fundamental aspect of a comprehensive and credible EU migration policy.

As explained earlier in this section, the destination country must agree to accept the returnee, at least in principle. This process is usually the most challenging, which could take several months or years to execute but may not achieve its purpose. It may, thus, sometimes result in frustrations for the authorities in attaining their goal, and the deportees remain uncertain of their circumstances (Interviews with JL 2020 and SS 2021). On the contrary, the situation for EU citizens is different, in which case the country of origin is obliged to take full responsibility for its citizens (Interview with JL 2020; European Court of Editors 2021). EU citizens, of course, can also be deported, but often for criminal offences.

A previous Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pekka Haavisto (Finnish Government Press Release 2021, paragraph 2), stated that the EU needs "Equal and sustainable partnerships with the countries of origin and transit to facilitate the EU's objectives and influence the root causes of forced migration". This assertion suggests that the deportation process might differ if third countries have equal partnership agreements and mutual understandings with the EU. For example, the European Court of Auditors (2021, p.7) asserts that low return rates result from "the difficulty of cooperating with the migrants' countries of origin". The European Commission (2021b) reiterated that returns remain challenging as only one-third of return orders are executed. In line with this, a former Finnish State Secretary, Parviainen, declared that 'we must strive to ensure that the immigration and asylum policy of the partner countries would also be respectful of international law and human rights' (Finnish Government Press Release 2021, paragraph 3). This statement means that cases of deportation can be smoother if third countries feel obligated to administer their part of the signed international and partnership agreements as prevails among the EU Member States. Therefore, policy decisions undertaken within the MLG framework should consider other essential actors, such as the governments of the countries of origin outside of the EU's local, national, and supranational levels. The more these actors feel involved and obliged in the process, the easier it may be to resolve these issues. Bisong (2019) argues that although the EU has negotiated some of these deals with migrants' countries of origin, the moves have not significantly reflected the situation on the ground. This argument calls for a relook at the current practicality of the situation and where the EU falls short regarding possible solutions. This statement indicates that the EU aims to achieve comprehensive return policy agreements with third countries through partnership and solidarity measures. It should be noted that "effective return" is considered an essential part of a "comprehensive and

legitimate migration policy" (European Court of Auditors 2019, p.8). For instance, the new solidarity mechanism introduced by the EU in the New Pact will fundamentally emphasise relocation and return sponsorship (European Commission 2020).

According to the Commission (2020, p.5):

> Under the return sponsorship, members will provide all necessary support to the Member State under pressure to swiftly return those who have no right to stay. The supported Member State will take full responsibility for not executing the return within a set period.

Despite this proposal offering a step forward, this study argues that problems with implementation remain because, looking at previous trends within the EU, implementation has been an area of disagreement among the Member States. Implementation is usually at the national level in the Member States, taking different approaches. Hence, unless the EU has already strategised alternative measures to counter these problems when they emerge, it will continue to pose problems.

6.5.1   Deportation from Finland

Repatriating an illegal or undocumented migrant from Finland undergoes different stages, as described in Figure 5 above. According to the data gathered, a person is classified as undocumented when they overstay their visa, cannot get a residence permit, or are denied asylum-seeking for various reasons (Interviews with LK, PH, JL and TK 2020). Statistics from the Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of Interior (2018) show that in 2017, the Finnish Police were involved in or returned 2,473 people with no legal residence permit in Finland. The figures for 2015 and 2016 were 3,180 and 6,600 people, respectively. These figures show that deportation from Finland increased during the crisis due to stringent measures adopted and the heated political atmosphere. As of 2021, these figures are estimated to be between 700 and 1100 in Finland (Happonen 2021).

According to an interviewee, every residence permit refusal comes with prohibitions from entry, deportation decisions, conditions on readmission or an opportunity to seek redress in the administrative courts of Finland (Interview with JL 2020). At this stage, the court becomes engaged in the governance of immigration should the applicant appeal their decisions within the offered grace period. The courts can approve or rescind the decisions of the FIS if they deem them worthy or unworthy, respectively. This assertion means that if the courts terminate the FIS' verdicts and the FIS does not appeal with new evidence, the court's

ruling overrides theirs, meaning that FIS must rescind its decision and grant the applicant the necessary permit (Interview with JL and PH 2020). However, if the court approves the decision of the FIS, the applicant can appeal several times so long as they have new evidence (Interview with JL and LK 2020) or they are scheduled for deportation if they lack new evidence to support their claim. This opportunity to appeal several times gives the asylum applicants some freedom to make a case for themselves, further complicating the overall process for all parties involved.

The Police decide on the execution of the deportation process by informing the deportees of their intentions (Interview with JL 2020). However, before embarking, they must ensure that the court has not issued any implementation bans. As one interviewee explained:

> These unfavourable decisions always include refusal of entry or deportation decisions. We do not need to make a new refusal of entry or deportation decision at my level when we start processing these persons to return to their home country. Because we already have a decision, we only need to verify whether this decision can be put into force (Interview with JL 2020).

The excerpt above suggests that the eventual expulsion, which is carried out by the Finnish Police[15], only begins when the court clears them. They then start negotiating with the countries of origin. As mentioned earlier, this process can last for an extended period, depending on the cooperation received from the third country in processing the necessary documents to accept their citizens. The deportation process can also become complex and time-consuming at this stage. Getting the required documents from third countries to execute the deportation can be prolonged depending on whether they are willing to accept the person as their citizen. This phenomenon resonates with the constructivists' contention that the foundational elements of international reality comprise both ideational and material components (Christiansen et al. 1999). Ideational factors, encompassing ideas, beliefs, and norms, possess normative dimensions influencing what is deemed morally or ethically acceptable. Simultaneously, these ideational factors have instrumental dimensions, impacting the practical strategies and policies adopted by states in governing immigration (deportation). Constructivists thus emphasise that these ideational factors express not only individual intentions but also convey collective intentionality, underscoring the role of shared beliefs and norms among groups of actors in shaping the international order. Also, they argue that the meaning and significance of ideational factors are not inhibited by

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[15] Sometimes in collaboration with the Finnish Border Guards and Frontex

specific historical periods or geographic locations but are enduring and capable of going beyond temporal and spatial boundaries. In essence, constructivism asserts that international reality is dynamically shaped by both material and ideational factors, with the latter playing a crucial role in influencing the behaviour of states and other international actors in governing immigration.

In modern-day, deportation cannot be accomplished without the proper and necessary documentation, further compounding the difficulties in the process. An interviewee emphasised this claim that "nowadays, we do not make returns without passports or emergency travel documents given by the returnees' embassy" (Interview with JL 2020). This argument links to what the European Commission (2021a, p.3) stated that:

> The unsatisfactory performance on return and readmission is due to the several challenges that the Member States face when carrying out procedures to order the returns and [when] cooperating with third countries on readmission.

Thus, deportees must possess passports or emergency travel documents. It can be a frustrating and complex process unless the deportees decide to leave voluntarily. As explained previously, successfully implementing a deportation ban depends on whether the third country agrees, at least in principle, to accept the person back as their citizen or resident, rendering it a complex process (Interview with JL 2020). In the case of criminals (usually EU citizens arrested for criminal offences in another member state), the EU's regulation mandates the Member States to approve the return of their citizens. For instance, Finland must accept all Finnish citizens, similar to what Romania or Bulgaria must do, which could qualify as a simple process. It is imperative to communicate to the authorities in the nations of origin that Finnish officials are facilitating the repatriation of their nationals from Finland.

However, because policy objectives do not always result in the expected results (Geddes and Scholten 2016), the deportation process can result in disappointments, leaving the illegal residents or rejected asylum-seekers in uncertain circumstances. They are then faced with different awkward situations in Finland (like having no means of welfare support or accommodation), making them sometimes willing to go voluntarily (Interviews with LK and PH 2020). Therefore, there are instances of voluntary returns[16], which are uncomplicated for the authorities to execute since the deportee is willing or enticed to return. Sometimes, the

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[16] These involves the deportee turning themselves in voluntarily to be deported to their country of origin depending on the circumstance in which they find themselves in Finland.

deportees are encouraged to return voluntarily with incentive packages (Interviews with JL 2020 and SS 2021). Although voluntary returns are more straightforward to execute, according to some interviewees (Interviews with JL 2020 and SS 2021), "actual returns split between forced and voluntary returns" (European Court of Auditors 2021, p. 7). The Police will then arrange the deportation flights by chartering, boarding a commercial flight or joining flights organised by Frontex in the case of voluntary returns.

In contrast, if it is not a voluntary return, the Police arrange and execute the entire process as explained above. According to the European Commission (2021b, p.1), "voluntary and forced returns are both key elements of an effective return policy". These arrangements typically depend on the kind of negative decision received. These are of two types: fast-track and regular. In the case of a regular decision, the deportation order can only begin when the court has authorised its execution. An interviewee described the fast-track one as:

> This fast track I mentioned means if there are no grounds for asylum or if a person tries to use the asylum procedure wrongfully, there is a possibility to implement the decision after eight days when the Police serve the decision to the person (Interview with JL 2020).

This distinction explains how complicated or easy it is for the Finnish authorities to deport rejected asylum-seekers or illegal migrants since standard cases can take a long time to complete. The fast-track is implementable within eight days of serving an unfavourable decision, reducing the complexities and resources spent on deportations. The fast-track deportees also have the right to appeal within the eight-day window. This assertion means anyone can appeal their decision (Interview with JL 2020). This right is consistent with what the European Stability Initiative (2015, p.21) noted:

> All rejected asylum-seekers also have the right to appeal before a court. In some EU countries, this is the final instance, while others offer the possibility of one or more appeals against the first court decision, depending on their judicial system.

In Finland, rejected applicants can appeal severally as long as new evidence is available (Interviewee with PK 2020), as mentioned above. In criminal cases, the Police and FBG have the authority to refuse entry into Finland, implying that the person deemed a criminal may not even enter the country, let alone apply for any residence permit on the asylum grounds or needing international protection. However, if the person has entered the country and only stayed less than three months, the Police again have the authority to deport such a

person immediately. The Police, in such circumstances, do not need any negative decision from FIS or a court's clearance (Interview with JL 2020).

However, as discussed in the previous paragraph, everyone can appeal their decision. Thus, even the criminals who require immediate deportation can also appeal their case before expulsion. An interviewee noted that:

> When we speak about criminals, we have the power to make our own decisions regarding the refusal of entry. Suppose the person has been in Finland less than three (3) months; in that case, we also have the power to make the decisions, but only for the criminals. Those decisions can be put into force immediately without any answer from the courts. However, we give every person the right to appeal their decisions, even if the law does not say we must wait for a while before putting the decision into force. Even criminals can practically complain to the court before arranging their flight or ship back home. (Interview with JL 2020).

This process could be attributable to the compliance with the fundamental human rights of the persons involved, the country's policies, the EU and other international agreements. The situation is such that human rights need to be protected, which makes the Finnish authorities allow everyone to appeal their case in principle.

Nevertheless, this study finds that Finnish authorities never tell the third countries that the returnee applied for asylum and was refused in Finland, leading to their deportation (Interview with JL 2020). Despite further probes, the interviewee was unwilling to explain why this is so, but it could probably be due to specific EU-wide rules that obligate the authorities to act in such a manner. Another assumption is that not informing the other authorities of the reason for the returns could make the country accept the person and not put the returnee in trouble with the authorities. For instance, when the asylum application was made on the grounds of fleeing war or persecution from a country that has no ongoing or past conflicts.

6.6   Summary

With a well-managed system, migration can contribute to growth, innovation and social dynamism (European Commission 2020, p.1). However, managing immigration is a difficult task that confronts the various actors engaged in the governance, especially in cases where immigration trends and types differ (Hodson and Peterson 2017). Governing the situation is different in everyday situations and emergencies. This chapter has examined the governance of immigration in an emergency, using a case study of the 2015-2016 migration crisis. It also

analysed the particular governance issue of deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees. The various actors engaged in immigration governance are many with diverse expertise but are working on a multilevel to achieve a common aim. Regarding the multilevel approach, adopting a holistic approach can be difficult because of the complexities and dynamism of the various actors. However, the Finnish authorities believe a comprehensive approach is necessary to address this need (Interviews with TK and IH 2020), which supports Terron and Pinyol's (2018) argument that holistic and inclusiveness should be involved in migration policies.

The need for routine immigration governance can differ from that in emergencies. For instance, the regular intake of quota refugees in Finland ranges from seven hundred to a thousand, which gives the public the impression that the Finnish immigration policies are tight (Interview with LK 2020). However, the number escalated ten-fold during the crisis, demanding swifter approaches to address the dilemma. Although this seems to be the reality, Finland still maintains a robust and strict immigration system (Interview with LK 2020). This example suggests that sustaining a robust system in emergencies can be difficult. During the 2015-2016 migration crisis, specific rules and regulations were tightened and relaxed to address the emergency. The emergency prompted the authorities to be more flexible in their approaches. For instance, the then-Finnish Government announced an action plan containing eight themes and eighty different actions to manage migration better. These few examples[17] indicate how the Finnish Government and other authorities collaboratively tackled the situation. However, an interviewee also believed that the Finns could have done better by accepting more asylum-seekers based on their capacity (Interview with LK 2020).

The immigration governance authorities described the crisis as unexpected and burdened them with actions to take. Evidence, however, suggests that occurrences before the crisis indicated that a crisis was imminent but was overlooked (Interviews with AA, JA 2021). It is, however, imperative to scrutinise these assertions critically, considering the challenging circumstances that prevailed throughout Europe during that period. Also, what constitutes a crisis differs depending on the individual involved. Beyond the crisis, immigration governance is still ongoing, suggesting that the phenomenon will not end any time soon. This explanation is because the drivers of immigration still compel people to move to and from different places to another, which the authorities must constantly deal with. Therefore, the EU-level authorities advocate solidarity and burden sharing to address the difficulties of

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[17] More examples of such measures can be seen in Table 2 above

immigration governance at that level. Collaboration between the authorities at the national level has been a constructive approach thus far. In contrast, constructivists may propose that the state does not enforce its intentions independently. Instead, the state consistently operated in collaboration with and through organisations within civil society, exhibiting a perpetual state of dispersion and pluralism (Bevir 2009).

Deporting rejected and undocumented asylum-seekers and refugees is another way to curtail the crisis. It is also one way the national level actors connect with the EU level, which is one of the objectives of this research. Frontex helps the Member States who have asked for assistance by organising joint deportation flights to reduce the cost of the Member States' doing it alone. Deportation, however, involves a long process and may end in disappointment for the authorities and deportees.

The chapter has elaborated on the governance of immigration before, during and after the crisis, using social constructivism theory and the MLG framework. The next chapter concludes the thesis by giving specific responses to the research question and drawing conclusions based on them. It will also elaborate on some recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

7.0   Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis clarifies and discusses the primary research findings and demonstrates their broader importance and consequences for both theory and practice. The thesis sought to understand, explain and analyse the interactive processes of enacting Finland's national migration policy within the broader EU context by examining the roles of policymakers and officials in implementing it within a multilevel governance framework from a constructivist perspective. By using a constructivist lens, the focus is not only on the policies themselves but on how the ideas and beliefs of the policymakers and other relevant actors influence the implementation process. It acknowledges the complexity of immigration governance by exploring the interactive processes, suggesting that it's not just a one-directional process but involves various actors at different levels within the MLG framework. Constructivism demonstrates compatibility with a range of paradigms, including the MLG framework utilised in this particular study (Barkin 2003). This claim indicates an understanding that migration policies are not only shaped at the national level but also influenced by EU dynamics. Therefore, the thesis unravelled the intricacies of these interactions, emphasising the roles played by different stakeholders and actors. Overall, it is a nuanced exploration of the human side of policy implementation, recognising the importance of diverse perspectives and beliefs in shaping the way migration policies unfold in Finland and the EU context.

The research thus focused on addressing the following specific questions:

> ➤ RQ.1) How does the constructivist perspective influence the understanding of the factors that shape and differentiate the nature and patterns of interaction between immigration governance institutions in Finland and their multilevel relationship with the European Union?
> ➤ RQ.2) How do Finland's immigration management institutions establish and maintain connections with the European Union in the consistent implementation of immigration policies, both in regular circumstances and during crisis situations?

Interaction is one of the main cornerstones of governance, without which monocratic dispensation can emerge (Jessop 2013). Finnish immigration governance actors are diverse and must interact to facilitate policy decision-making and implementation processes towards a common goal of governing immigration. Such a phenomenon is consistent with the

constructivists' argument that constructivism is appealing because it offers a different perspective from what is commonly accepted. That is, constructivists suggest that phenomena such as immigration governance do not only have the potential to exist differently but also possess a historical narrative shaped by various interests, actions, and power dynamics (Jovanović 2021). This study emphasises the core principles of constructivist theory, emphasising social construction, historical contingency, and the role of agency and power in shaping social reality (immigration governance). It thus invites critical reflection on taken-for-granted assumptions and encourages a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that underlie social phenomena such as the MLG of immigration studied in this study.

7.1   Study's Contribution to MLG, Social Constructivism, and Literature

Three levels of policy decision-making and implementation of immigration governance: local, national, and supranational, were studied in this thesis. The study aligns with the claim of Jeffery and Peterson (2020, p.762) that "MLG did not start as but has become a powerful [conceptual tool] that helps to account for the distribution of public authority across different territorial scales, both within the EU and elsewhere". Hence, this study contributes to the literature on MLG by also aligning closely with the arguments of Mancheva et al. (2023, p.4) that "collaborative governance is cross-sectoral in two ways: [one of which is] in terms of allowing interaction between different policy arenas, as well as between non-governmental actors". The three levels of governance explored in Finland and the EU identified and explained the linkages, negotiations, policy decision-making, and implementation in governing migration. It also evaluated how immigration governance, specifically policy decision-making and implementation in Finland and the EU, occurred before, during and after the 2015-2016 migration crisis. That is, routine policy decision-making and implementation happen when there are no pressures on the systems governing immigration to force hasty decisions or performances by the actors involved. The opposite, a crisis, however, may necessitate adjusting the processes to suit the unfolding situation in one way or another, as happened during the 2015-2016 migration crisis within the EU (Collett and Le Coz 2018). The theoretical significance of this finding suggests that within constructivist epistemology, the primary trait emphasising the experiential nature of the constructed world does not assert its accuracy in terms of correspondence with an ontological reality (Lesh et al. 2003). In simpler terms, it denotes that within a constructivist view, what is perceived and understood as reality is formed by individual and collective experiences and perspectives rather than just reflecting on an objective truth external to cognition. The truth

is, thus, understood within the context of individual and collective experiences and interpretations. This assertion suggests that perceiving reality, for instance, the 2015-2016 migration crisis, is mediated by our sensory experiences, cognitive processes, cultural influences, and social interactions. It implies that understanding events such as this migration crisis and how decisions were made and implemented is not straightforward. Instead, it is influenced by multiple factors from both individual and collective perspectives merged during interactions by immigration governance actors in Finland and the EU.

The problems of asylum-seeking and refugeeism present several difficulties in policy decision-making and implementation in Finland and the EU. For instance, by international comparison, the number of refugees in Finland is small, yet a significant number have arrived within the framework of organised resettlement programmes and during the 2015-2016 migration crisis (Wahlbeck 2019b). However, the genesis of such problems, such as the underdevelopment and diverse crisis, remains in migrants' countries or origin, which necessitates that the developed nations that are the recipients of these migrants introduce measures to put the situation under control either at their end or try to influence it at the departure countries through various agreements and initiatives. For example, "during the last 16 years, and as of May 2016, the EU has concluded 18 EURAs with various non-EU countries" (Carrera 2016, p.1; European Court of Auditors 2021, p.11). Some of these control measures and mechanisms are the governance issues analysed in this study, for instance, the deportation of asylum-seekers and refugees. The implication of these measures and initiatives for immigration policy decision-making and implementation is that the local and national levels, directly and indirectly, influence the process at their level and likewise at the multilevel, shrouding the whole phenomenon in complexity. For example, the national level, which is the pivot around which the other levels emanate, directly influences both the local and supranational levels (Spencer 2018). The local level indirectly influences the supranational through their interactions and activities while directly engaging with the national level (Kern and Bulkeley 2009). Then, the supranational level can, directly and indirectly, influence the national and local levels, respectively. This example is consistent with Carmel's (2014) argument that these dynamic interactive relationships jointly constitute the political and social landscape of the EU and beyond. The implication of this finding to theory is that to understand changes in immigration governance within the EU, it is crucial to consider both the transformative potential of ideas and the continuing influence of power relations in a dynamic interplay which are necessary for explaining changes in immigration governance. Such interactions complement each other by providing different insights into the mechanisms driving changes within Finland, the EU and the international system at large

(Barkin 2003). Together, they offer a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complexities of Finnish, the EU and international politics and the multifaceted nature of change within these immigration governance systems. This argument resonates with the views of Saurugger and Mérand (2010), who assert that constructivists generally contend that socialisation to norms and the formation of identities is crucial for understanding the actions of governments and EU institutions. This reality explains why a small EU Member State like Finland is able to influence EU policy dynamics when interacting with more prominent countries like France and Germany. Hence, by integrating the transformative potential of ideas with the continuing influence of power relations, researchers and policymakers can gain a more holistic and nuanced understanding of immigration governance within the EU, accommodating the complexities of both national and international politics.

Another significant finding in this research, which is related to the theoretical understanding in the previous paragraph, is that actively engaging in the interactions and being assertive by Finnish immigration governance actors, in particular, facilitates how much influence actors have during the decision-making and implementation (Mancheva et al. 2023). These influences can occur notwithstanding their level of authority within this complex MLG relationship. This conclusion aligns with Faberi's (2018) argument that cooperation and opinion exchanges among diverse stakeholders within MLG relationships enhance the attainment of common objectives. Also positioning closely with this finding is Geels's (2020) argument that immigration governance actors exhibit distinct stances, interests, resources, and interpretations. This heterogeneity within MLG dynamics engenders interactions, exchanges, deliberations, conflicts, and strategic manoeuvres within the interaction, thereby cultivating an atmosphere conducive to diversity and innovation, which constructivists contend and acknowledge. This analogy facilitates our understanding of the role every actor plays within the MLG framework in promoting the achievement of their goal of immigration governance. Consequently, policy decision-makers and implementing agencies must consider this complicated but functional relationship. In so doing, these actors and institutions would consider the interests of citizens and the business communities as well. Such interests, when ignored, can be catastrophic to the entire policy decision-making and implementation process. For instance, Tortola (2017) argues that empirically depicting the MLG framework can lead to relegating non-state actors or completely ignoring them from the governance relationship. This study, thus, advocates that it is vital to include the interests of all the actors and stakeholders in governing immigration in Finland and the EU.

These MLG interactions were analysed using literature reviews, expert interviews and documentary analysis of government/EU policy papers and documents. As mentioned above, this study has demonstrated the existing connections between institutions at the local and national levels and, subsequently, the EU level when these actors cooperate in making policy decisions and implementing them. In the thesis, it became evident that complexity and dynamism get more complicated as the level of interactions gets higher and more actors become engaged. Particularly at the EU level, the complexity is more intricate because the Member States bring their national positions, negotiation skills, alliances, sovereignty and redlines to this level. This claim supports the argument of Chebel d'Appollonia (2019, p.196) that "some elements of flexibility related to the decision-making process, participation and implementation are unavoidable" and responsible for the complexity of the EU's migration policy. Therefore, to constructively make policy decisions about immigration at this level and get the Member States involved to facilitate implementation, the actors and institutions resort to solidarity measures and burden-sharing, which currently are the principal objectives of the EU (De Wenden 2021; Doomernik and Glorius 2016). The argument presented here aligns with the constructivist viewpoint, which suggests that constructivism within the EU is based on an ontological framework characterised by exclusivity, resulting in a perceived flawed division. This dichotomy encompasses dualisms such as objective/subjective, socialisation/calculation, interest/norms, or reason/culture, potentially leading to an oversimplification of the multifaceted nature inherent in decision-making processes (Saurugger and Mérand 2010, p.5). This finding highlights the interconnectedness of institutions across different governance levels and emphasises the increasing complexity of interactions as more actors become involved in Finland and the EU. It contributes to the understanding of how policies are formulated and implemented by Finnish and EU immigration governance actors within the MLG systems from a constructivist perspective. The EU level has, nonetheless, advanced various measures and approaches, some of which were successful while others are still being contended by the Member States (Niemann and Zaun 2018) and yet others unsuccessful. For instance, several critical actors like governments and the EU Commissioner at both the national and EU levels institutions have suggested that it may be time to create an additional coordination structure with strong links to national governments (Collett and Le Coz 2018, p.48). Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.48) mentioned further that:

> In 2014, in a prescient document outlining how the European Union can improve its responses to refugee crises, the German government proposed the introduction

of an EU-level special representative for refugees and an expert group on refugees that would draw participants from multiple directorates-general.

This thesis concludes in support of the argument above that based on the difficulties and complexity of solidarity and burden-sharing among the Member States in governing immigration; the EU may want to consider such propositions laudable.

7.2 Constructivist Interpretations of Interdependence, Solidarity, and Challenges in MLG

As mentioned above, the primary aim of this doctoral research project was to critically examine the nature, complexities, and dynamics of immigration governance in Finland, as well as its corresponding influence on the EU's policy decision-making and implementation and vice versa. The findings of this research support the argument that the complexities and dynamism involved in the interactive governance of immigration on a multilevel are typical cases of entangled mutual interdependence. These interactive processes, therefore, entail complex tasks. As Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.40) stated, "it has become clear to all involved [in MLG] that perfect solutions are rare and decision-makers must weigh various tradeoffs- from political sensitivities to practical day-to-day management issues". That is, the EU and the Member States have to deal with many compromises, and the acts of solidarity and burden-sharing offer some headway to policy implementation. For instance, Doomernik and Glorius (2016, p.432) emphasised that several political declarations underscore the acts of solidarity and burden-sharing as the bedrock for the CEAS. Solidarity and burden-sharing, however, present significant challenges for the institutional actors at the EU level. The MLG framework presents a vivid picture that enhances our understanding that immigration governance as an act is a challenging task to be performed by a unilateral entity at any level single-handedly within Finland, the EU and elsewhere, as stated at the beginning of this chapter. Hence, this study concludes that governing immigration requires the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders to achieve their targets, with every actor contributing their quota towards attaining this overall goal despite the complexity. This conclusion aligns with the constructivist view of Geels (2020, p.12) that "real human social behaviour is a complex mix of multiple capacities and activities".

Although there is complexity and dynamism at Finland's national and local levels within the MLG relationship, they are minimal compared to the EU level because of the trust and habitual collaboration among the authorities. This claim implies that the complexity and

dynamism are easily managed at the national level. According to Koivukangas (2002), in Finland, collaboration is a cultivated cultural habit because Finns trust themselves, and homogeneity ensures good teamwork, which supports with this research's finding. Consequently, cooperation among the Finnish authorities during the 2015-2016 crisis was smoother, which suggests that trust in interactions can facilitate the process routinely and during a crisis. This claim also supports the assertion of Collett and Le Coz (2018, p.34) that "in times of crisis, there is a critical need for legitimate and accountable decision-making". Thus, "breaking the rules" during a crisis is synonymous to staying true to the contract (Van Middelaar 2020, p.40). Almost all the interviewees from the national and local levels in Finland agreed that they find collaboration very easy among the Finnish authorities, although they are from diverse levels of power and operationality. Cooperation is dominant at the operational level compared to the policymaking and decision-making level, where negotiations can get messy because of different political ideologies and inclinations. The nature of the interactions among the Finnish immigration governance actors can be regarded as mutual and cordial. Since they trust themselves, they effortlessly cooperate when crossing administrative boundaries. Therefore, Finnish immigration governance authorities usually form cross-administration around specific projects like promoting work-based immigration and talents, deportation, asylum reception management, establishing identities of migrants, and criminal activities. These created projects are either permanent or temporary and facilitate collaboration and implementation. One such project (International House Helsinki) has received positive feedback from the authorities and users alike. The theoretical significance of this finding applies to a constructivist paradigm, which contends that the underlying determinants shaping international reality encompass both conceptual abstractions and tangible variables. These conceptual factors possess not only practical value but also normative implications, reflecting not just individual but also collective intentions. The interpretation and importance of conceptual factors remain consistent regardless of time and place (Christiansen et al. 1999). Therefore, this finding presented above supports the constructivist view that cooperation and collaboration among governance actors in Finland and the EU are influenced by shared norms, beliefs, and collective intentions, which transcend time and spatial boundaries. This perspective underscores the importance of understanding the ideational dimensions of international relations in shaping governance practices and outcomes in the field of immigration (Paster 2005). Hence, incorporating both ideational and material factors into this analysis facilitates a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms driving changes and innovation in immigration governance in Finland, the EU, and international politics at large. This correspondence suggests that

ideological factors heavily influence policies and practices in governing immigration, and studying these factors are essential for policymakers and analysts to navigate the complexities of immigration governance effectively.

Another crucial finding is that the Finnish authorities communicate regularly on proceedings, updates or changes during a crisis. This communication is an efficient way to improve information sharing for governance purposes. The Finnish system also has the 'ulkomaliset rekisterri' (Aliens register), which is accessible to all the immigration governance authorities from one source when making and implementing immigration policy decisions. This access to information accelerates recommendable governance processes. However, information access alone is insufficient to make policy decisions and implementation easy, particularly at the EU level. That is because national interests and positions supersede information availability and mutual trust at the EU level within this multilevel relationship. This argument aligns with the constructivist theorists' proposition that identities emerge through reciprocal engagements between the individual ('self') and external entities ('other'), wherein the interests and behaviours of the individual often mirror those of the external entities. This foundational trait of symbolic interactionism asserts that the socialisation processes within their environment shape an individual's sense of self (Maslow and Nakamura 2008). This theoretical connotation suggests that national interests and practices are influenced by interactions with other actors, including other countries or entities like the EU. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending the complexities of policymaking and implementation in a multilateral context.

This research study has shown that immigration governance institutions and actors in Finland work together harmoniously in making and implementing national immigration decisions and programmes for migrants (asylum-seekers and refugees inclusive), as stated above. The relationship discussed is three-fold, thus horizontal, vertical and indirect linkages. Beginning with the local levels, they are generally the recipients of immigrants because these immigrants settle in the local communities. The local level actors make their decisions and programmes to support the national guidelines, indicating that they abide by the national regulations, although they can also engage the national level actors in negotiations and decisions concerning immigration matters when necessary. Moreover, there are horizontal local-to-local level engagements regarding these negotiations, whose results feed into a vertical national-local level relationship within the MLG framework. Therefore, their contributions to national policy decision-making and implementation are invaluable to the actors at the national level. In that regard, national level actors actively engage the

capabilities of the local level during interactions. If the national level feels that local authorities are competent to handle specific immigration tasks, they should be allowed. For example, during the 2015-2016 migration crisis, "municipalities in Finland, Latvia and Malta had no say regarding where reception centres should be situated" (EMN 2018, p.28). Simultaneously, the authorities at the national level were unwilling to shift immigration policymaking and decisions downwards to the local and regional levels, who were ready to help. Such situations lead to the decoupling of the actors who think interests and policies contradict or conflict (Zapata-Barrero et al. 2017). Geels (2020) emphasises that actors make moves, and others have to interpret them, consider their options and act in response. This process of interpretation and response shapes the interactions between national and local authorities in immigration governance. The decoupled actors then engage in venue shopping to find actors with common interests, which can be a limitation to the functioning of the MLG relationship. Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk (2019) emphasised this argument that national governments side-step to seek more migrant-friendly regulations elsewhere, detaching (decoupling) from the other actors engaged in migration governance within the MLG relationship. For instance, during the migration crisis, Hungary and Slovak Republic decoupled from the EU relocation policy quotas, while Belgium, Italy and Switzerland also disengaged from the Schengen Visa Code and the duty of intra-EU solidarity (Panizzon and Van Riemsdijk 2019, p.1229).

The national level institutions and actors also interact as colleagues at the horizontal level. In the top-down or bottom-up (vertical level), the authorities at the national level have more influence in decision-making at both ends of the continuum. That is, they can issue commands or directions to the local level authorities as national decision-makers and coordinators of administrative branches and liaise with the EU-level actors as sovereign national entities. The joint decisions and policies the authorities co-create within the MLG relationship form the state's regulations governing immigration. These joint decisions from the local-national level interactions are Finland's stances transferred beyond the state to the supranational level during negotiations. The government of Finland has expressed concerns about setbacks in cross-administrative commitments, especially in the field of immigration (Finnish Ministry of Interior 2018). The government mentioned that the allocation of funding to operating models encourages interactions among actors to emphasise their commitment. Finnish legislation obligates certain immigration governance authorities to cross administrative boundaries and remain committed. Other authorities have no such obligations and only cross administrative boundaries when requested or have mutual agreements. When necessary, the authorities requesting the assistance must assure the other party of the need to

collaborate. As a consequence, the other parties remain committed to the cause. Such acts of reciprocity are geared toward authorities supporting themselves in pursuing a common goal routinely or during crises. This research claims that such acts of cooperation among the Finnish immigration governance actors are less problematic due to trust, as mentioned above. Sometimes, it is just a phone call away, with no long meetings to deliberate and negotiate. The authorities can agree over a phone call to get things underway. This lack of sophistication in cooperation is because, as a small country, these governance actors get to know each other quickly, especially in the immigration field, where the roles involve many interactions and rotational functions. When assurances are insufficient, the governance actors sign MoU agreements as a symbolic representation of cooperation and commitment. This act shows a different aspect of MLG; trust among the various authorities can facilitate the functioning of the relationship with the framework. This conclusion is consistent with Mancheva et al.'s (2023, pp. 4-5) argument that "the authorisation of this sort of interaction can be deliberate through the creation of institutional opportunity structures or established ad-hoc by authorities or other actors". For instance, some authorities working at the Ministry of Interior might have also previously worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and know people there. They might also have already worked together in some purposely established working groups on immigration. This familiarity can facilitate policy decision-making and implementation. Thus, the flexibility and ease with which Finnish authorities can govern immigration is a step in the right direction and should be encouraged. This argument suggests that other countries that do not already have such systems can emulate the Finnish example. It also implies that larger countries can imitate the Finnish example, as trust is part of ethical governance, which should be a bedrock element in the MLG structure, as pertains to the constructivism beliefs. That is, the MLG relationship will be less functional than expected without trust and mutual understanding, which supports the argument of Mancheva et al. (2023). There should be cohesion between the levels of the MLG relationship to bind the actors in unity, devoid of mistrust, back-biting and unnecessary politicking, to ensure an effective MLG relationship.

A significant finding which is contrary to the ideas expressed above is that, although Finnish immigration governance authorities maintained that they cooperate easily, the bureaucracy within the Finnish system sometimes slows things down. Finland is a bureaucratic country where maintaining due processes can sometimes nullify the flexibility involved in immigration governance. However, straightforward collaborations are mainly effective on the horizontal level of the MLG in Finland because the local level has, for instance, found cooperation with the national level difficult at times. Therefore, this unproblematic cross-

administration or cooperation claimed by the Finnish authorities should be reflected across every level of the MLG framework. In this way, the Finnish immigration governance system will reduce emergent frictions from interactions, which will facilitate the overall smooth collaboration discussed. That is, the lines of authority, which, according to MLG framework's description, should be fused, are still visible. The functionality of the MLG relationship should involve the crisscrossing of information and mutual understanding at all levels. This argument implies that when communication flows easily throughout all levels, the various actors become aware of the issues that need attention and the best way of approaching them. Social constructivism theory, therefore, emphasises that what is perceived as reality is not something fixed and objective but rather something that emerges through interactions and communication, shaped by language and shared understanding (Eads 2023). Through language, individuals are able to express their thoughts, feelings, and interpretations of the world, and through communication with others, they negotiate shared meanings and understandings. Language is thus crucial and not just a tool for conveying pre-existing ideas but rather a medium through which reality is actively constructed and negotiated. In other words, the core principle of social constructivism emphasises the social and linguistic nature of reality construction and highlights the collaborative and dynamic process through which meaning and understanding are created within a social context. For instance, as noted in Chapter 5, the FIS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland maintain daily direct communication where they update each other on the ongoing activities in their institutions and what could be a common way forward. Such communications ensure they can quickly resolve emergent issues or plan to prevent forthcoming ones together, thereby eliminating bottlenecks in policy decision-making and implementation within the MLG of immigration. This claim supports the argument by the OECD (2017) that exchanging information and pooling resources between governmental and non-governmental actors for effective and efficient cooperation at policy implementation levels is crucial to creating a sustainable relationship. Without this, services will be duplicated between decisions and policy implementation. On the contrary, maintaining such a form of open communication may not apply beyond the state level because of individual Member States' structures and the nature of existing domestic politics, highlighting the complexity of the MLG relationship. Simultaneously, the EU level must encourage solidarity among the Member States to enhance cooperation in making and implementing immigration policy decisions. This study argued that solidarity alone may be insufficient at the EU level without trust. Trust should be a bedrock element in policymaking, decision-making and implementation throughout the MLG relationship to achieve efficiency, as asserted above.

This claim advocates for a comprehensive approach to MLG interactions that integrates information exchange, resource pooling, solidarity, and trust to enhance policy effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in the context of immigration governance within the EU. Such an approach is non-negotiable for small states involved in MLG since they do not have the resources and power to defend themselves against massive global movements unilaterally.

Again, this research argues that governing immigration must incorporate national interests into policy decisions to create a robust system that is functional at the EU level. This addition of national interests will facilitate the implementation of the developed policies and decisions. EU-level institutions and actors make directives and regulations that the Member States must transpose and incorporate into their national policies and decisions regarding immigration (Mancheva et al. 2023). The EU uses these elements to influence the Member States' policies[18], and the latter uses national sovereignty and positions to influence the negotiation processes and outcomes in a complex MLG relationship. The EU also depends on and negotiates solidarity and burden-sharing to execute its policies and sometimes resorts to fines and sanctions. However, the EU level exercises caution when applying any rules and regulations because of the sovereignty of the Member States. For instance, Chebel d'Appollonia (2019, p.197) contends that "the solidarity mechanism designed to address the issue of burden-sharing among the Member States remains weak" because its practical applications present challenges. Regarding directives, the EU develops an overarching framework, which the Member States use to design their national policies and make decisions in different formations. Like any Member State, Finland must remain committed to the activities of the EU in developing policies, making decisions regarding immigration and implementing them unilaterally or conjointly. This assertion means that the decisions and policies made at the supranational level embody elements from the national and local levels depicting the MLG's framework. Although it is a must, the commitment levels of Member States differ. However, this study found that Finland remains committed to the EU by engaging actively in the EU's activities to influence the outcomes of decisions and policies. Another reason Finland remains actively committed to the activities of the EU and contributes to its development is that it considers the EU's developments to be attached to the stability, security, and prosperity of Finland and Europe. This finding presents practical implications for policymakers and other MLG stakeholders, suggesting that effective immigration governance requires a balance between EU-level objectives and national

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[18] The EU influences Member States' policies (which includes national and local levels) subtly. It does not have much direct influence on the local level.

interests. Understanding how national interests influence policy decisions and implementation processes can thus inform the advancement of more effective and sustainable immigration policies in Finland and within the EU. It also contributes to the constructivists' theoretical debates surrounding the MLG complexities of how national interests influence EU-level decisions and vice-versa in governing immigration.

Finland influences the EU's immigration policy decisions and implementation processes in diverse ways, although the perception is that smaller States can have difficulties influencing the EU's decisions. Thus, although a country's size and material wealth affect the amount of power a Member State can exercise at the EU level, influencing the process does take other forms. For instance, Finland can influence the process by actively participating in all decision-making and implementation. This study contributes to the constructivist literature on migration governance by emphasising that Finland uses non-material power, such as forming alliances with other Member States with similar stances, trust for and among national actors, and cultural beliefs. Finland also has a system of preparedness in place to shape the processes at the EU level. That is, any EU issue must go through the Finnish Parliament before negotiations at the EU level. This claim implies that Finland always goes to the EU with a carefully deliberated national position, which has gone through parliamentary discussions and debates. These positions transferred to the EU-level negotiations do not suggest fixed policies because there can be instances where they need some flexibility. Assuming negotiations do not favour Finland's stance, the negotiators must return to the capital through the parliamentary proceeding again to get a new perspective before returning to Brussels' negotiating table. Although this seems like a cumbersome process, this is what Finland opted for when they joined the EU compared to Ireland and Denmark, which have the options of opt-in or out, which they can use in various configurations. This process has worked well for Finland in influencing EU immigration policy decision-making and implementation. It reflects the dynamic and complex relationship in the MLG of immigration between Finland and the EU. Consistent with this conclusion, Mancheva et al. (2023, p.5) contended that:

> Collaborative institutions should have process rules and procedures guaranteeing that all relevant actors participate and influence decisions equally; decision-making is transparent; decision-makers are held accountable through a mechanism of ex-ante control.

Mancheva et al. (2023, p.6) further argued that "diversified actors in collaborative institutions can lead to more legitimate decisions but also generate conflicts", which is the case when Finland's governance actors interact with the EU-level actors. This research study, therefore, expands the argument on interactive governance to support the broader literature on EU policy implementation and transposition of directives, as claimed by Mancheva et al. (2023). Although their policy area was on Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), this research study examined migration governance, emphasising the Return Directive in contributing to the argument that diversified actors interacting within a joint policy decision-making and implementation framework must have an equal voice during interaction for mutual co-existence and policy implementation success. This argument aligns with the constructivists' suggestion that various cultural or traditional perspectives can be perceived and categorised differently. They also argue that creating social realities is not just about applying existing beliefs and meanings; individuals actively contribute to forming and constructing these beliefs and meanings through their actions. The motivations and intentions of actors are influenced by the traditions, discussions, or knowledge systems they are part of, all of which are acknowledged as outcomes of social construction (Bevir 2009). In essence, constructivism emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality (immigration governance), highlighting how our perceptions, beliefs, and actions are shaped by the cultural, historical, and social contexts in which we exist. It challenges the idea of an objective, universal truth, suggesting instead that our understanding of immigration governance in Finland and the EU is subjective and contingent upon the frameworks through which they are interpreted. Therefore, knowledge serves as an evolving mechanism essential for the persistence and effective functioning of collaboration among immigration governance actors rather than simply reflecting an objective reality beyond the individual (Eads 2023). This assertion challenges the notion of knowledge as an absolute truth and instead emphasises its practical utility in navigating and adapting to the complexities of the world (Finland and EU immigration governance). It highlights the importance of understanding knowledge as a dynamic and subjective process rather than as a fixed and objective reality.

7.3   Avenue for Further Research

This chapter, therefore, concludes the discussions in the thesis and summarises the various responses to the research questions of this study. It provides insights into the complexities of collaborative governance, highlighting the importance of diversity, equal participation,

and an understanding of the socially constructed nature of reality in policy implementation processes within Finland, the EU and beyond. Future studies should include all other actors and institutions this research could and did not access, like the Finnish Immigration Service, the Finnish Ministry of Justice, the Administrative Courts, the European Parliament and the European Commissioner. For instance, future research could analyse the perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders, such as the Finnish Immigration Service, the Finnish Ministry of Justice, the Administrative Courts, the European Parliament, and the European Commissioner in immigration governance. Exploring their roles, decision-making processes, and interactions within the context of the topic at hand could provide further valuable insights into the broader dynamics at play. Additionally, studying any potential differences or convergences in their approaches, policies, and interpretations could enrich our understanding of the complexities involved in immigration governance. Finally, considering the perspectives of individuals (asylum-seekers, refugees and other groups of migrants) directly affected by these institutions' actions could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the overall impact and effectiveness of existing policies and practices. Although this is a limitation in the work, it does not undermine the research. It shows that applying the MLG framework and the social constructivism theory in analysing immigration governance is possible when not all actors have been engaged.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A- List of Documents

PRIMARY SOURCES

Institutions (Actors)	Quantity	Description	Data Type/ Sources	Themes/Topics
European Council Conclusions	4	These are the conclusions of various discussions of the European Council	EU Council's Database (contributions, speeches, and stances of Member States)	Migration and immigration
European Commission's Communications	7	Communication from the commission to the European parliament and the council	Decisions, proposals, and Legislations. Press Releases	• Returns and readmission cooperations • Voluntary Returns and reintegration • New EU Pact • Refugee Crisis • Towards a common migration policy • Policy priorities in the fight against illegal immigration of third-country nationals

				• Progress report on the implementation of the European Agenda on migration
Finnish Government	1	Aliens-Act proposal to the Finnish Parliament	Finnish Government database	Amendments in the Finnish Aliens Act
European Parliament and the Council	4	Common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection	Official Journal of the European Union	Directives
Committee of the Regions	2	A new Pact on Migration and Asylum	Official Journal of the European Union	• Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions • Bringing the EU closer to its Citizens
European Parliament	7	Common European Asylum System	Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs	• Achievements during the 2014-2019 legislative term • The role of the European Council in

				negotiating the 2021-27 MFF • Migration: Latest challenges • EU funds for migration, asylum and integration policies • Thinking about the future of Europe • MLG in Cohesion Policy • Brexit and Migration
European Commission (Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs)	3	Annual Activity Report	European Commission Database	• Migration Management • Dynamics, roles and the drivers of policies • Labour Mobility in Europe
European Parliament and the Council	4	Legislative Acts and other Instruments	European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation	• Regulation of the European parliament and of the council on the

				• European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 • Common procedure for international protection. • Regulation on Police and Judicial cooperation • European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations
EASO	4	EASO Asylum Report 2020	EASO Report	• Situation of Asylum in the European Union • Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2015 and 2017 • Migration to the EU: five

				persistent challenges
Finnish Immigration Service/ European Migration Network	8	Key Figures on Immigration	Statistics compilations	• Patterns of Arrivals in Finland and integration activities • Asylum and migration policies in Finland • Changes in immigration status and purpose of stay • Changes in immigration status and purpose of stay
European Stability Initiative	1	The 2015 Immigration Crisis through Statistics	A compilation for politicians, journalists and other concerned citizens	Different Statistical themes. E.g., Asylum recognition rates in the top 10 industrialised countries in 2013
The Council of the European Union	15	Meetings of the Council of the European Union	Minutes of meeting	• Migration Movement • Common procedure for international

		(JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS)		• protection in the Union and repealing Directive • How the EU manages migration flows • Timeline - EU migration policy •
Finnish Prime Minister's Office	2	Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy	Prime Minister's Office Publications	• Vision for the Future • Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government
Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment	1	The integration programme of the Finnish Government	Ministry's report	Government's resolve on integration programme
Finnish Government	4	Government's report on EU policy	Publications of the Finnish Government	• Strong and united EU – towards a more sustainable European Union

				- Government action plan on asylum policy - Strategic Programme of the Finnish Government - Provisional EU measures would help Latvia, Lithuania and Poland manage migration
Finnish Parliament	3	Government Report on EU Policy	Grand Committee Report	- Strong and United EU - Reform of the EU's immigration and asylum policy for the Government - EU economic governance review
European Court of Auditors	2	Special Report	Publication Office of the European Union	- Readmission cooperation with third-countries - Asylum, relocation and

				return of migrants: Time to step up action to address disparities between objectives and results
Global Detention Project	1	Limited use of alternative detention review	Country Report	Immigration Detention in Finland
Finnish Ministry of Interior	6	Government's resolution on the future of migration	2020 Strategy Report	• Migration Policy implementation • International Migration • Aliens Act
European Union Agency for Fundamental Human Rights (FRA)	3	Migration Events in Europe	• Quarterly Bulletin • Periodic data collection	• Key Fundamental Rights Concerns • Migration situation in the EU

SECONDARY SOURCES

Institutions (Actors)	Quantity	Description	Data Type/ Sources	Themes/Topics
OECD	4	Report on the role of the Finnish Permanent Representation	OECD Report	• The interface between member states and the European Union • Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees • Working together to sustain success • Integration of immigrants and their children
Finnish Institute of International Affairs	1	New Pact for Europe-National Report FINLAND	Report on the National Reflection Group	Rebuilding Trust through dialogue
UNCHR	1	Response to the European Commission's Green Paper	UNCHR Report	• Future of the Common European Asylum System

				- Refugees and migrant arriving in Europe and at Europe's borders
Helsinki Times	2	A group of ministers from the green party have outlined proposals to attract 80,000 foreign workers to Finland in order to plug knowledge gaps and stimulate growth in the Finnish economy, which has been battered by the coronavirus.	News Items	- Attracting foreign workers - majority of asylum seekers are so-called economic migrants and that uncontrolled immigration
YLE NEWS	7	- Parliament Debates Finland's Immigration Policy - Finland to double foreign student visas, shorten citizenship road - Minister: Finnish	News Items	- Parliament is debating whether Finland has put enough – or too much - emphasis on attracting foreigners to work in Finland. - Finland calls on EU Commission

		government aims to tighten visa rules for Russian citizens • Finnish PM: EU should restrict Russian tourism • EU countries sending up to thousands of asylum seekers to Finland		to introduce common policy on Russian visas • FT: EU wants to suspend Russian visas

Appendix B- Participants Information Sheet

CITY CAMPUS

Nottingham Trent University

50 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, NG1 4FQ

School of Social Sciences

Department of Politics and International Relations

Research Topic: Immigration Management Within Europe- Social-Political Perspectives of Finland's Immigration System.

Institution   Interviewed……………………………………
Date…………………………..

Principal   Researcher: Amen   Gokah
       Interviewee…………………………………..

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Participants Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in this research because your institution is involved in the governance of immigration in Finland/EU. This sheet briefly explains the rationale of this research to enable you to decide whether you are willing to participate. Please take time to read and decide voluntarily.

This study is an evaluation of the interactions between policy and decision-making institutions, and the implementation of the policies and decisions concerning immigration in Finland and the EU at large. These interactions take place within a multilevel governance

framework. Multilevel governance involves the participation of different actors or players at different levels of decision-making. The different levels include the EU, national (Finland) and the Local (some institutions in Finland). Your institution plays a role in immigration governance and this research seeks to critically examine the interconnections between your roles and interactions with the other institutions involved. It also analyses how challenges in cross-administrative are addressed to ensure effective governance of immigration.

In the 2015-2016 immigration crisis that confronted the European Union, certain political decisions were made on how to contain the phenomenon. These decisions included policy changes, formulation of new policies and actions to achieve them. It is established that the EU and the Member States struggle to find common grounds on external immigration management. In this research, I would like to know the dynamics at play between the EU and a smaller nation like Finland. It is known that smaller states are mostly underrepresented in research about the EU. I, therefore, decided to examine the influence a smaller nation can have on policy and decision-making within the EU and vice-versa.

Both Finland (the institutions involved in the research) and the EU will benefit from the outcome of this research. The recommendations will inform multilevel governance policy and decision-making, the interactions and the creation of perspectives on immigration, and how decisions are effectively implemented to achieve your aims.

Participation in this study is entirely your decision. No monetary payment is involved. Anonymity is assured because pseudonyms will be used especially in verbatim quotations. No video or audio recording is proposed but will be ideal if you would allow it. You can also withdraw your participation at any time during the data collection but not six weeks after the interview has taken place. This is to enable the researcher to finish the thesis write-up. Any data collected will be managed well according to the data management plan of Nottingham Trent University. The University reserves the right to keep the output data for up to 10 years before destroying.

This study is towards the attainment of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Politics and International Relations at the Nottingham Trent University in the United Kingdom. It is not intended for any commercial purpose. If you need any further clarifications, kindly contact me on the contacts above.

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

PhD SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE- THE EU INSTITUTIONS.

Research Topic: Immigration Management within Europe- Social-Political Perspectives of Finland's Immigration System.

Institution Interviewed………………………… **Date**……………………………..

Principal Researcher……………………… **Interviewee**………………………..

1. What is the EU's position on immigration into the Member States? Does the EU have more power to determine the immigration policy of a Member State? How complex can this multilevel governance interaction be? Does a complex decision-making process mean higher or quality policy outcomes?

2. Do you consider immigration as a crisis or as a potential for the EU? Why is it a problem policy area or a prospect for the EU?

3. Do you intend to strictly regulate immigration, promote or stop it altogether? I mean immigration of third-country nationals into the EU's zone.

4. How does the EU's policies on migration affect a Member State's immigration policies? Has the EU got any special relationship with Finland or a general rule applies to all the Member States in dealing with immigration issues?

5. To what extent is the EU able to enforce its policies on immigration in the Member States besides the Schengen or the free movements of the Member States? Can the EU for instance obligate Finland to follow a particular policy while Finland is reluctant to?

6. How did the EU influence Finland's decision on immigration during the 2015-2016 immigration crisis that hit the EU? Did the EU provide the necessary tools and legislation that helped Finland to deal with the crisis?

7. How did Finland's decisions on immigration affect that of the EU during the crisis? Were there decisions or policies that Finland made and implemented that the EU was not in support of during the crisis? Did the EU try to intervene or interfere in any approach that Finland used at that time?

8. Are smaller Member States like Finland able to influence the migration policies and decisions of the EU similarly as the larger ones? To what extent are they able to? Are there different negotiating powers based on the size of the Member States?

9. How does the EU negotiate migration policies with the Member States? Is it a general negotiation with all Member States or it is specific to each Member State? Can you give an example or specific policymaking or decision-making negotiation process involving a Member States (it will be nice if it relates specifically to Finland)? Who makes the decisions and at what level?

10. How does Multilevel Governance influence the EU's decision on immigration in Finland? Does the EU engage directly with specific institutions or with the national government in the governance of immigration? Is there a direct relationship between the EU and the local levels in the Member States when it comes to policymaking?

11. How does the EU negotiate return policies of third-country nationals with the Member States? Are there any push-backs from the Member States that influence the approaches that the EU adopts? Do these competencies lie with the Member States as it is in the case of labour migration?

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

PhD SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE- FINNISH IMMIGRATION GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS

Research Topic: Immigration Management within Europe- Social-Political Perspectives of Finland's Immigration System.

Institution Interviewed…………………………………… **Date**…………………………..

Principal Researcher…………………………   **Interviewee**………………………..

1. Are you involved in the policymaking, decision-making and implementation governing immigration within Finland? If yes, please tell me how you are involved and why you took certain decisions using case examples.

2. How are you involved in policymaking, decision-making and implementation on immigration at the European Union? Apart from your role as an individual, how does your institution achieve this purpose?

3. How do you interact with other institutions to formulate policies and make decisions on immigration and implement them?

4. Who made the policies and decisions concerning immigration governance during the 2015-2016 crisis that affected the European Union? What was Finland's relationship with the EU amidst the tensions at the time?

5. How were those decisions made and implemented, and at what level? Were the decision-making and policymaking processes any different during the crisis than regularly?

6. Are you able to influence the EU's decisions and policies on migration? If yes, how can you do so and at what level? How is Finland, as a small country in terms of population, able to influence the decisions of the EU and how does the EU influence Finnish immigration policy?

7. What are your perceptions about immigration? How do you form these perceptions?

8. How do other actors/players influence the way you perceive immigration? How do you engage with these actors in your work?

9. At what level of governance is your institution? How do you coordinate and collaborate to achieve your goals? How do you negotiate policies on immigration?

10. Are there any forms of cross-administration? How do you ensure cross-administrative commitments?

11. Are there any cross-administration challenges between your institution and other immigration governance institutions? How do they influence decision-making and policymaking? Who wins, who compromises and to what extent?

Appendix D- Consent Form

Nottingham Trent University

PhD Social Sciences

Department of Politics and International Relations

Research Topic: Immigration Management Within Europe- Social-Political Perspectives of Finland's Immigration System.

Institution Interviewed…………………………………………
Date……………………..

Principal Researcher: Amen Gokah   Interviewee……………………..

Email: amen.gokah2018@my.ntu.ac.uk   Phone: +447405165883

<u>CONSENT FORM</u>

<u>**Please   initial box**</u>

1. I have read and clearly understand the participant information dated……………… concerning the above-named project. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and involves no form of coercion/force and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any explanation but not six weeks after the interview. This enables the completion of the thesis write-up. ☐

3. I understand that the data collected during the study will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and the Interviewee provided with a transcript to sign. The data will be stored and protected in the Nottingham Trent University's database for 10 years and will be protected by the institution. ☐

4. I understand that the information collected would be anonymised but could be accessed by other researchers undertaking similar studies as reference. ☐

5. I understand that there would be no monetary payments involved in participating in this research. ☐

6. I agree to be contacted for feedback and clarification on issues related to the information given. ☐

7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of Interviewer   Date   Signature

Appendix E- Sample of Coded Transcripts

Coding Helsinki Police

Research Questions	Primary Theme (s)	Primary Code (s)	Secondary Code (s)/Extracts from the data
What roles do immigration management institutions perform in Finland?	Performing Roles	Code 1. Commencement of the current role Code 2. Previous Role before the current one Code 3. Absent/Present in the role during the 2015 Crisis Code 4.Description of Role	4----- SO the basic task, lets say of the European level is to create sort of overarching framework for immigration…… Ummm..however, lets say there is ….so the legislative framework is for the EU to set up, but the most important big task if you like, is that for anything that is about economic migration……….. the Member States are completely in charge of the numbers of how many non-EU national they want to admit into their territory✓ ✓ ✓ ………. so this is to say….we have legislation on say family reunification, so the Member States…that they have agreed to this legislation……… and then there is certain rules and conditions that have to be fulfilled for family reunification, and once the conditions are fulfilled, the Member State has to give access to the territory…and the same is the case for example for immigration for the purposes of studies……. Now! These things are not labour-related but for anything that is labour-related, so we have for example legislation on highly-qualified thus the EU Blue Card or we have legislation on seasonal workers ummm.. there also the Member States have to transpose

			the legislation......... into national law but it is entirely up to them, how many people they accept into their country for these purposes....so the can already say...so now we have the EU rules on the admission of highly qualified ummm....the EU Blue card directives is all in place, but because we don't need anybody currently on the labour market......... we are actually not admitting anybody....... So that is the most basic ummmm.... lets say division of responsibility between the EU level and the Member States....... ------- Well! The directive is a legal instrument.... that ummm.....sets the framework....... and then the Member States have to transpose this into their national system....so that is ummm....like a second legal instrument that's a regulation that something has applied directly...... so there the Member States don't need to adopt a legislation....its just a piece of law that applies directly but a directives basically gives the broad goalpost let's say...... and then the Member States have to transpose this into national law....so they have to make their own laws....... And umm.... so like I said, it still doesn't mean...we have a number of directives for labour....so lets say migration....... so they have to implement this into national law but it doesn't mean in practice that for labour purposes, they need to actually admit anybody........ That's the important sovereignty lets say Member States have........ ------ so the treaty states clearly.... You know (that) the management of immigration meaning the admission..... and the regulation of their stay or the conditions and the rights and all of these things....so that's our job!..... on the legislative side but integration policies remains 100% (one hundred per

			cent) the responsibility of the Member State….. ------ but we have ummmmm…..no authority to prescribe any particular integration policies or measures to Member States….
What is the level and nature of interaction among them?	Levels of Interactions	Code 5. EU level Code 6. National Level	5---- Because there ummm….I mean….well you have to distinguish there between two thing….First one is Resettlement…… So that is ummm….people who are not in the EU (The refugees who are outside of the European Union……… and what we call Relocation that is people who already have refugee status who are already in an EU member state lets say in Greece….. and they should go to another Member State in order to have a fair distribution of lets say refugees…….. but there the legislation is very different because you might know that on the relocation, after the migration which was in 2015-2016, the Commission made a proposal for a mandatory relocation of refugees……. ummm….in the EU which was not accepted by the Member States…… and on the resettlement, the Commission I would say has like a coordinating function…to make sure that the resettlement happens and also there is financial support for resettlement… but again the European level cannot prescribe how many refugees a Member State should accept into its territory….. Yes! I am talking about relocation…… So, relocation is…that was what the Commission's proposal at that time was about…so people who arrived lets say on the Greek Island……. they should be relocated to another Member State….when you talk about resettlement, it mean that they are not yet on the European Union…… so the mandatory… ummm…the Commission proposed after the 2015-2016, the mandatory relocation

			mechanism….. based on economic and ummm….population-related indicators but this was never accepted by the Member States…..
			----- Yes! But there is! I mean the funding in the area of integration is very low!..... I mean if you look at a country like Germany that has quite a lot of migrants coming in….. I would say 95 % of the funding for integration come from the national level and may be 5 % comes from the EU level……
			------ Mmmm….Ummm…again it's a good question! Umm… I would say the smaller Member States, they often act in groups….so they look for like-minded allies and then they form like a bloc on a certain lets say a proposal or a certain issue….and basically they try to stick together and make the case for their interest. And of course if they really don't like something, it what we call a "blocking minority" so in the system of what we call Qualified Majority Voting (QMV), they try to get as many countries around one issue as possible so that they have what is called the "blocking minorities" so that the legislative proposal could not advance against their will✓ ✓ ✓ Chapter 5…….. and in reality, if they will, I mean it quite boring in a way because I mean often these ummm…. these…how to say….these country alliances they form around the geographical criteria….so if you look at Finland, it quite often that they develop the tradition together with other Nordic countries….. or you can see it for example when it comes to budgetary issues that what we call the "net contributors" to the EU budget…so lets say the more rich countries…… they stick together….. or now you can see it clearly when it comes to migration issue and more the refugee side of migration, all the Southern Member States that have sea borders…… like Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Malta….they

			tend to stick together….. or you have the example of what we call the Visegrad 4 countries….. so more recent East European Member States…..Slovakia, Czech Republic, ummm…..Hungary, Poland, who are quite reluctant to take in refugees….. and the will…..they are forming a bloc to advance their interest….. ------ Umm…well, I wouldn't say the policy!! I mean its very clear that push backs are not ummm…. allowed under any law…… that the EU has…..so when you talk about…..I guess you mean incidences that has been reported in Hungary or Croatia…… so any of these reports of push backs, I mean you can each time see that the Commission ummm… condemns these….. and then of course I mean when it come to the push backs, it was often quite tricky to see exactly what is the other things….. ummmm…but at least politically, let say this something that the Commission will always and has to condemn…..
How can cross-administrative commitment be improved among them?	Ensuring and Enhancing Cross-administrative commitment	Code 7- Attaining goals through collaboration Code 8- Cross-administration Code 9- Cross-administration challenges	7----- and on the resettlement, the Commission I would say has like a coordinating function…to make sure that the resettlement happens and also there is financial support for resettlement… but again the European level cannot prescribe how many refugees a Member State should accept into its territory (also seen at theme 5)… ------- the only thing we do on this in practice on the European level is we have like Networks with Member States where we can facilitate the exchange of good practice and we can provide funding to Member States in integration policies and measures….. ------- I mean…. I always found that you know….if you have extremely high values, you could say that the Commission's idea for this relocation mechanism is a good idea but ummm….I think for me it

			was quite likely at the time that this will not fly and unfortunately it has come like this….and I think it has mainly to do….and there, its difficult to differentiate between politics and what a certain Member State says its population wants or does not want… and there of course you can have a chicken and egg question you know…is it Hungarians that don't want to accept refugees or is it the Hungarian Prime Minister who doesn't want to accept refugees….and does he have policies and communication measures that you know…convince and reinform a certain position of the Hungarian population or is it the Hungarian Population that has voted for the Prime Minister and pushes him to take a certain stance…you know, this is very difficult to say but it basically comes down to…in the case of solidarity for the refugees….those countries who don't want the refugees are arguing mainly that culturally and economically, it is not in their interest….I mean I would say that that is the most concise ummmm…answer there is to this……. and then there is of course Member States who say…but I find that they are even….they are the ones that show more solidarity that historically has had quite high levels of migration but they are the ones who show themselves to be still I would say rather open…….. Yeah although Sweden has gotten a lot restrictive recently
How do Finland's immigration management systems influence that of the EU and vice-versa?	Influencing Decisions and policymaking at the EU/National Level	Code 10-Decision-making during the 2015/16 crisis Code 11- Regular Policymaking and decision-making at the EU/National level	11.----- that there is nobody at the European level that can tell member state X to admit 2000 seasonal workers or something like that….so that is because of the principles of subsidiarity…….. because clearly, why should the EU

| | | | level take such a decision? Its for the Member State to decide how many people they need on the labour market……..
----- Well, its unfortunately ummm…not a Yes or No answer but a both- ways answer! So indeed Member States I mean clearly they have their own systems….. and of course they want to keep their legislation as lets say, stable as possible…I mean as a starting point but then we in the European Commission we look …..first of all we have a different overview because we normally can see all national legislations and the benefits umm….the advantages but also the disadvantages that national legislations have….. and of course we also have in mind not only the Member State's interest….. but also the European interest as a whole…..which mean that the European Union can indeed ummm…..come up with proposals that cannot yet be found in national laws…. but quite often when we propose something or not quite often, we always look at what exists already in Member States and we can see how can we improve this situation towards the EU as a whole but also for the individual Member States……
------ Well! I mean when we make legislative proposals, in our field now ummm…the Council (so the Assemble of the Member States) and the European Parliament have the same power…….. Ummm…at the same time I think its sad to say that, and I can't really explain why but one way or the other, the balance of power seems to at least in our field shift always a bit more to the Member States or to the Council. And may be one reason is that some Member States are just as vocal and strongly worded positions…… because they are just more visible….and you know the European Parliament, its more complex because in theory or |

			hopefully also in practice, it represents the whole of Europe or citizens of the EU…so maybe their positions are sometimes not clear-cut as they can be in the Council….so maybe for that reason….somehow maybe just my perception but I still have the impression that the Member States have a slightly more important role or even though formally, they are on an equal footing……. Well, we are the ones who make the legislative proposals……. as the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) prescribes….so there is certain fields in which we are supposed to regulate and there is certain fields in which we are not supposed to regulate. Ummm…..we try to facilitate the negotiations between what we call the "co-legislators"….so the Member States on the one side and the European Parliament on the other side…… and once a piece of legislation is adopted, we are also the ones who have to monitor first of all, how in the case of Directives is this law transposed into the national systems and in a second step, how is this law applied in practice because those of course are two different things……. First, we have to make sure the directive has found its way into the national legislation and in the second step, we have to make sure those rules are applied as was intended with our legislative initiative…….. Yes! Yes….so we do this!....so it's the field of Migration and Home Affairs…… So the Permanent Representation is basically the Ambassador to the European Union……… and basically, they are the ones ummmm….they are basically the level before the Minister…… so, every few months, the Minister for different thematic area, so for our field it's the Interior Minister….meet to discuss the most important things and also

			to agree their positions on legislation …..legislative proposals….and the body lets say that prepares this…..is Coreper…so the Assembly of the Ambassadors….and…so they are in fact come as ummm just an important layer of people that ummm….are always based in Brussels……. it will interact with their capitals to make sure that the positions of the capital is well understood and reflected…and then they relay this position to the other Ambassadors…so over there, there is always an assembly of ambassadors of Member States and the Commission also present……. Sighs! Well, again good question! There is what we call "Variable Geometry"…so its called variable geometry…… so you know for example that not all Member States have the Euro…… or not all Member states are part of the Schengen Area….. so while we try to ummm…..make our policies and strategies as European as possible, in some instances, its just clear that some initiatives can only,…..cannot involve all Member States…and that might have political reasons or practical reasons. Ummmm……for example, I would say for the Euro, it was a mix of political reasons and economic reasons because you need a certain level of convergence of the economies….. to have the same currency and in the case of Schengen, its very much….well, its always a political question but its also a question of how well secured are your external borders…… how well functioning are all your border checks at your airports where flights from the outside of the EU arrive….So there is just many many regulations in practical aspects that have to be fulfilled before a country can become a member of the Schengen Area…….. So, there it can be technical that not every party is involved but of course , I would say

			that our ambition is that we limit the number of these fields because if they ummm…proliferate ummm…at some stage, the whole thing will become complicated that, it will be impossible to understand anymore……..
	Forming perception(s) about immigration	Code 12-Perceptions of Immigration

Code 13-Other actors influencing perceptions | 12----- Well! It's a good question again! Its important to differentiate!.....I would say that the EU (and I think you can see this in all official and political statements) sees migration more as an opportunity because we are very much aware that for demographic reasons, ummmm…..for economic reasons, we have to be open!..... to migration, but that is of course lets say more of the controlled or the legal migration….. ummm…when it gets more complicated is when we come to the forced migration element….and there of course, so when we talk about refugees and asylum seekers……. and there of course the EU's position is very clear that umm.. there is the Geneva Convention, ummm…we have to give protection to people who seek protection…… but of course we know that ummm….I mean it comes at the end of the day that, from the geographical position of Europe that, Europe is in a very unique geographical position, and Europe will not be able to give this protection to everybody who seeks it or to welcome everybody who comes to the EU for economic reasons….. and this is of course where it gets tricky because on the one hand there is international obligation that says you have to get protection when it is asked for……. but there has to be also the recognition of the fact that Member States…ummmm…and we could see this quiet clearly in again the 2015-2016 situation that with this large number of arrival, ummm….the political side got extremely complicated and we saw |

			quite a big division in society on how to deal with this……
	Comparing the EU's and Finland's immigration Policies	Code 14- Competencies as determinants	
	Recruiting the Finnish Permanent Representation to Brussels.	Code 15-Role of the FPR	
	Complexities in decision and policymaking at the EU level	Code 16- Complex Negotiation Process	16----- and of course they want to keep their legislation as lets say, stable as possible…I mean as a starting point but then we in the European Commission we look …..first of all we have a different overview because we normally can see all national legislations and the benefits umm….the advantages but also the disadvantages that national legislations have (also found in 11)….. ------ and when the Commission makes legislative proposal, there would have been talks with all Member States and not only Member States but also economic and society stakeholders, normally months in advance of the actual proposal, so there are always consultation exercises ummm…which means that the reality on the grounds and the legislative situation in a particular member state are well known to the Commission…..and then it depends on the different area, whether ummm…abled body of the Commission has more resemblance with the law of a given member states or less…… but not possible to generalize…… ------ Well! Through talks and negotiations ummm……that's the very simple answer so…..the negotiations on the legislative proposals, they can, especially in our field of immigration, they turn to be complicated, political and they turn to be long……so it is not unusual if the Commission makes a proposal for a directive, and then the negotiations with the Member

			States would last maybe for 2 years…… so there is really many many meetings with the Member States often to find compromises……. but ummm…still there's never a guarantee for a successful outcome…….. so we have what am sure you know of course in our field which is called Qualified Majority Voting (QMV)…… so in the Council (so the body where the Member States are represented), we can vote on legislative proposals at the negotiations, but normally because it is such a a sensitive field, we try to avoid this, and we try to get a unanimity….. but if its not possible we go for a vote….and as we could see with the initiative that we just talked about, meaning the relocation of refugees initiative that was proposed in 2015-2016, that was negotiated for 3 or 4 years…… and there was never a successful outcome!......
			------- No! it was with the relocation. In labour migration, its true that the negotiations turn to be difficult…but for example we had an agreement recently on the reform of the EU Blue card directives so on highly-skilled internationals……. but ummm…like I said, in a way, it is easy for the member states to agree to this because all they have to do "is to agree to the legislation but they cannot be obliged to make use of it" because they are always in charge of the numbers of labour migration…….. Ummm….that is very different because we have no legislative powers in this field
	Anticipating the 2015-2016 Crisis	Code 17- Anticipating the crisis at the National Level	
	Decision-making on immigration issue at the EU and National Levels	Code 18- Harmonization of Migration Policies	18----- so that's what I mean when I say there is no guarantee for success or sometimes, the position of the Member States are just so fixed, that its simply not possible and then the Commission has the

				right to withdraw the proposal……and then either abandon any harmonization in this field or make a new proposal…… ------- Yeah! Ummm…..so its EU's policy because there is what is called the "return directives"…….which ummm….which sets the rules and conditions for the return of what we call "Illegally staying intercontinationals"…….. Ummm….I would say there are two ways the EU comes into play….The first one is that when it is about the return of that intercontinentals to their countries, it sounds easy in theory but its very complicated in practice because many origin countries, although by international law they are obliged to do so, they don't take back in practice their own nationals….. and there's a number of reasons for this……though you….I mean you simply cannot just be returned to your origin country, if for example its not clear what your origin country is, or you don't have any status and if your origin is not ready to issue any papers because they contest for example that even if the person comes from their country…… So, the role of the EU is you know if you have like one small Member State, the negotiating power vis-à-vis a third country who is not cooperative in readmitting their own nationals is very small…… but if you come as the EU, you have a bigger bargaining potential……. And the second ummm….the second role that the EU can have is a practical one, ummm…which can manifest itself for example in the organization of joint return flights…… So lets say you have from a number of Member States, ummm…quite limited number of third country nationals from Member States to a given country and they would for example lets say flown because there is no other way to get to the country…… how do you do this? Lets say you have 5
			259	

			people that you will need to return, you cannot charter your own flight, sometimes you cannot use normally scheduled flight….so one thing Frontex can do for example is to ummm….organise joint operations on return….. whereby Frontex will charter an airplane and then Member States will send these people to be returned to a certain location within the EU and from there, they will all be flown together to the third country in question…… so that's one practical element how the EU can act……. Yep! So basically, Yeah exactly! So if lets say a limited number of a country's nationals in a number of Member States, ummm…. you know it will be too expensive for each Member State to charter their own planes…….. so Frontex can basically collect cases (if you like) and there can be a jointly operated flight from the EU, from different Member States to one third country…… Yeah! To be honest I think both options are doable. I think there can be a situation whereby, lets say its between two or three countries, the Plane will touch down in those two or countries to collect the people……. Or I think there can be a situation where they meet in one location and they are flown back to their country……. Exactly how this works in practice, I don't know!......
	Integrated Border Management	Code 19- Controlling Internal and External borders	19----- and that of course….I mean we just ummm….presented yesterday a reformed proposal for the Schengen area and one of the main concerns is indeed the internal border controls!...Now in the recent context, not so much linked to the refugee movement but because of the Corona crisis…. There are also Member States introducing internal border controls and I mean…I think its hard to say that the abolishment of the internal borders within the EU is one of the key achievements of the EU, and now we see it

			increasingly under threat! So we need to find ways to…on the one hand deal with the legitimate concerns, because of the Corona but also to keep the borders as opened as possible…..
	Local Level Activities	Code 20- Local Level Decision-making and linkages to the national Level	
	Multi-level policymaking	Code 21- EU level and local level interactions	20---- Again its Yes and No! I would say if it comes to the important bits which is the law-making…… ummm….the answer is rather No…but that's simply a practical reason because you know the interior ummmm….interior field….the interior legislation….Home Affairs….. is normally at the central level in each Member State…so lets take a certain country like Spain, you might have certain competencies that lies with the autonomous regions…… but when it comes to immigration, it's the central level that is responsible and that's the case for most, if not all EU Member States….and its for that reason that when it comes to the hard law making, I would say its 98 per cent the national bodies with which we interact. So when it comes to integration and there I said it is not a legislative function that we have but more like a supportive and funding, ummmm….role, there we have a lot of contacts with regional and local authorities because there basically we try to get as closely as possible to the grounds……. where integration really happens……… ummm…and this can be quite interesting because you can have countries in lets say Central and Eastern Europe and you could have a (inaudible word) in which the national level ummm…is quite lets say….you know….you have not ….. a pro-immigration ummm…position and policy, but you can have a Mayor, who is quite progressive and who might have a

		262	big interest in integration, then we can interact directly with the local level and we can directly give funding to the local level…so that's one way for us to interact directly with a level other than the national level……. It can be both! I mean lets say we have quite ummm….regularly we have events….. and there, is also networks of cities across the EU and in fact also out of the EU and there the Mayors of these cities they cooperate on integration matters and then we can also get involved and provide funding for example…… so it can go both ways…….

Appendix F- Code 6 (National Level Interactions)

CODE 6

HELSINKI POLICE

6- DO you mean cooperation between other Police and the National Police Board? We have our meetings….. We do it in interactive way so that everybody can see who is talking to and so on…and ummm……Yes of course but this time we have Corona, so we do it using the modern equipment……✓✓

---- Mmm…every Police authority have their own power….. in Helsinki we only coordinate the repatriations but of course we have a lot of personnel here in Helsinki and we give help to other Police areas…… but that's easy! That's easy. Its not problem….. we do that daily….. in the immigration field, not in every field. For example, if we talk about the pre-trial investigation…… we don't cooperate so much but in immigration we do cooperation a lot. In Helsinki we have this nationwide coordination given by the National Police Board…….Mmmm…well well we do a lot of cooperation regarding the operations when we send people back to their countries. So we are able to for example, we might have escort patrol from the Police and Border Guards together……ummm but we do not make so much cooperation in establishing identity because Police has authority in establishing identity and Border Guards,….same authority-….so the authority which is in charge of a foreigners case, they have to make decisions about establishing the identities…… We do not make mix decisions regarding this issue but the mix things are involved when we do cooperations…… ummm that's right. Identity will be established if a person is registered……. or if a person comes to the Helsinki Police to register, It's the Helsinki Police but if the person registers at the Helsinki -Vantaa airport, then it's the Border Guards that establish the identities……✓ ✓

--- Yeah! I now understand! Unfortunately, we have only little cooperation with the Helsinki City……In Finland, we have reception centres issued by Red Cross and not very much cooperation but ummm some times, we might have meetings with the red cross when they are in charge of the reception centres but that's not normal…… when we have a big issue concerning so tasks, then we contact them or they contact us and we can cooperate…..

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

6- Finland also umm…doing a lot of things at operational and in practice between immigration authorities (FIS),Police, Border Guards also….So in Finland we are very intensified……intensive cooperation between all relevant authorities…….✓ ✓

- Yes…so we are steering….so the Immigration Service is handled by the Ministry of Interior so we are…It is our service in that way so that we are making sure that it had enough resources and the information and so on….so Immigration Service is the central body when it comes to migration but at the same time also, the Border Guards….. which is also in our administration and Police so that ummm….especially Border Guards and Immigration Service…. they were working hand-by-hand (Hand-in-hand) together…

-Actually, Finland we… what comes to cooperation between the Ministries, we have a very long tradition and co-tradition to work together…so its very easy to have key persons from different ministries to meetings and then discuss…we have also some ummm….of course regular working groups…so soo…it is like more or less tailored at the operational level and also at the Ministerial level and of course between those authorities so we have ummm good condition to cooperate with different authorities …so that's very easy…..of course we have ummm….also small country is benefitting that way so its ummm…people know each other so its very easy to gather…..✓ ✓

CITY OF HELSINKI

6---but but yeah.. maybe one thing I think that's good to bring to your attention if you are not aware of is the biggest.. uhh ughh.. the Helsinki capital region really plays a crucial role in in in this field or the cities of Espoo and Vantaa are neighbouring cities of Helsinki and the reason why that… the government has such strong incentive to listen to us is that half of Finland's immigrant population live in the Helsinki capital region…… So, whatever is been done here will have a significant impact in the overall picture…...Yeah! If we screw-up, its gonna be a disaster but if we succeed in what it is we do in delivering appropriate services to to people of immigrant background, then it will have a significant impact also in Finland overall……

FINNISH BORDER GUARDS

6-Indeed we do! Indeed Yes! We have a very long tradition from that in the end of 1960s and …. We are small country with many rural areas where there are very few authorities in some certain places, so cooperation between the Police and Customs is a good example of how we could solve these kind of challenges umm…what it says from that…….. and and… as you noticed there is quite some new Law and government decree concerning cooperation……and so we share some tasks……we do have some overlapping in our tasks, so regardless of which authority is present in some certain area, the task will be done there and especially in Lapland and small rural areas, it is us Finnish Border Guards there…….

--Indeed! We do as police…we as Border Guards we investigate most of the organise…organising of illegal immigration crimes in Finland…and and and we do have authority to investigate human trafficking case but we…..in practice there are only few which are investigated by us…mostly by Police…

--- It is in political level!...... indeed! And when they are concerning immigration issues, it is in the Ministry of Interior indeed…… Yes! The Ministry of Interior prepares the legislation, maybe how directives or regulations which comes from Brussels are regulations itself but directives are to be prepared as legislation within country so, Ministry of Interior has this kind of role and implementation issues are in our Border Guards or Immigration Service, and in some cases, within Police as well…….. So we as Border Guard, Immigration Service and Police, we are more or less practical actors…… who receive the legislation from Parliament of course but the Ministry of Interior is the preparing organisation in there….over us…CH 6

---Yeah! When when… Am sitting here in our SQ…so am in the middle…the Ministry of Interior and these organisation levels are on top and we are the next one….and we do….our Districts will do the practical thing in the field……and it is same in Police!...so we are…our Headquarters and National Police Board, we just under Ministry of Interior but but we are leading our units and umm...our Deparments which are around the country…..

FINNISH RED CROSS-LEENA

6---undocumented migrants, yes migrants and then that's …that is we do together with the ummm….well, it's a very complicated issue too, because we think that it's the role of the

ummm the Red Cross to take care of the most vulnerable…so the…that's quite a lot happening on the local level…but also we have worked together with the Police and Border Guards….and ummm Immigration Service that we would have the right to meet ummm undocumented or those who are in the detention centres already…that not only those who are on the streets walking around in the communities but to visit the detention centres and that needs to be…that you can't do without the cooperation of the authorities….you need to have the agreement with the Police and the Customs and also the Immigration Service…the difficult part is the Police which is always thinking that what is the Red Cross…are we telling about what is happening in the detention during…..for the refugees, that is one part of what we are doing….and that's cooperation with the authorities, then we have on the local level, different kind of umm support services for them….migrants…….Ya Yes we have ummm and that's also from this gambling or slotering machine and the the project that we did….we have a place in Helsinki where the undocumented can come and ummmm….its again together with ummm… I don't Know what it is called but its part of the church….together, so the church gives us a place where the undocumented can go and take a shower and also to stay for the night….and the Red Cross is providing a place where we are advice, counselling and also different kinds of activities……

FINNISH RED CROSS-PAULI

6---Yeah, actually we are in the middle…so..ya because in Districts, we do have 12 Districts in Finland and we are under the same umbrella but we do have own board, so we are part of the Finnish Red Cross but we are independent District…and ummm all Centres for Asylum seekers are run by Districts in Finland…none of them by Headquarters…so its ummm….when we are dealing with the asylum seekers, the practical and actually the agreements are between Districts and Immigration Service…….directly..yeah…so we do have this kind of agreement which is ummm…so that Red Cross is doing such activity but then with Ministry of Interior and with Immigration Services, and ummm…then every District has got their own agreement with them…and then all the decisions,, actually the request for umm…closure of Centre or opening a new Centre or extending….expanding the Centre in places or reducing the capacity of Centre they come directly from the Immigration Service….. No…we have a negotiation with the Immigration Service directly…so headquarters is not really involved…they want to but they are not involved for that……. Yeah, its just the practical….practical ummm….not really…there is no any other kind of communication what is according to law….it is the normal cooperation, yeah…..

MoFA

6- we are in close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and then Migri-bureau responsible for migration issues, with Ministry of Economics when needed and with Civil Societies…… ummm so everything is prepared in the open way where we are involved, where we are led by the Ministry of Interior……..✓✓

NATIONAL POLICE BOARD

6--Yah ummmm….. we …stammers… communicate on daily basis but then it is good to say that when it comes to this immigration issues, it is mainly the Migration Department! The Police Department is involved ! yes! But not as much as the Migration Department….. Well in that sense that they take care of the legislations on migration issues….. Migration issues is the only things they deal with. The Police Department deals with various issues, not much of the immigration issues which is quite a small part of the job there…..

----- yeah we still eeer--- stammers-… start with this number 3….. this cooperation, so we have of course this with the Ministry of Interior but other Ministries like the Foreign Ministry……..and ummm… one thing when it comes to this interacting and cooperation—its good to remember that Finland is a small country and ummmm… the resources are limited..ummm… we are not so many people so we are ummm… so cooperation is like a cultural thing……. so I think we are very good with this…. when compared internationally…. So, it works very well……. everybody knows each other, and it is very easy to contact…….✓✓

TEM

6---(**Challenges in decision-making**)-- In Finland it is like almost everyday life……Yes, there is many many working groups on various issues…right now if we have any issues, we have to discuss with different groups. And now like you now, the EU Commission gave on Wednesday on the acts of immigration…..as it is, we have already got messages from other ministries, to have discussions about the pact, how we are to react to it……..✓✓ Yeah! It is sometimes that we do not agree issues, things ummmm……for example, giving example of Blue Card…… Yeah! For example, there is of course boundary skills by the Finnish legislation and of course when it comes to labour ummm…….labour laws, then they might have inside effect or influence or when we have to respond to Council's initiative or

Commission, then of course we have to discuss "What can we say" for example the size of the threshold-what level it should be, so it wouldn't affect the Finnish employment market………so sometimes, its difficult to combine those views or have to find….of course if we civil servants, we cannot find agreement, then of course we have possibility to give it to Ministries, Ministers and Governments to decide, of course………. The highest power is the Parliament……. When the initiative comes, then of course they have to inform Parliament…..

-------(Facilitating immigration into Finland).-- There is ummm….how to say that……ummmm now the government has set an aim to have more immigrants into the country…so…and of course like I said, the process must be much much more faster…so…but now we have process….let me start….when foreigners, third country national wants to come to Finland, he or she has to apply the permit, and has to visit the Finnish embassy abroad, so…and then has to wait decisions, until when he gets permit he can come to Finland……this is….we have seen that there has been discussions that we should have more embassies, they should deal with decisions like ummmmm…..there is lack of personnel, there is still not enough persons to deal with the issues in the embassy (there is maybe one person only), and then there is maybe hundreds of applicants….everybody understands that that's not enough…and at the same time there is some holidays for some workers so…the process must be but then there is sometimes some stakeholders in the country like our ministry or universities are unhappy that this not working correctly because they are abroad and need to get into the time slots for interviews at the embassy, the fingerprints….yeah its difficult but now we are planning to make it more easier…… we are thinking, do they have to go to the embassy at all? So its positions of different Ministries based on money----The Foreign Ministry cannot have more workers or embassies because they don't have the money for it…so…of course it is the decisions of the politicians to decide where to open the embassy… for instance in Philippines, I think it was in Manila in Philippines, the embassy was closed and we used to have quite a lot of nurses coming into Finland, I think they opened the embassy again………they closed because there was no money in the budget…so it is not easy to plan, like those municipalities who are planning for themselves, that okay we have this hospital or school so we need to have these immigrants from….and they have some cooperation with different countries… so this is the plan to get those people from the Philippines but then there is no embassy… the process is not fast enough or they don't get permit because the salary level is so high….but they need to combine this process and get it more smoother and easier….but of course then, it also comes to money, society like the Ministry of Social Affairs…because when immigrants

come, the idea is that they have to manage themselves to live here…because if everybody gets the money from the society or the state, its expensive ummm….but there are many issues…….. yeah, they have to travel far away and that's also expensive…..yeah, so we know…it's a problem………

----And then the Finnish system is sort of difficult….first you have to apply at the embassy and then you have to wait decision, and then you have to come again to the embassy….so its….we know these problems but we are not able to solve them all…….but they are issues we know that its not easy….so..because we are members of EU, we have the same border and we have to know we get the same persons-….rights persons with documents and so on into Finland…..and then of course we need to see that there is no ummmm….. that the employers are paying the salary they need to pay….so that they are not misused…so many aspects on the sides so…….. Yeah it is….also human trafficking is a big issue…..

Finnish MP 1

6----- Yes! Well, in Finland in general ummmm…. I think there is something like a firewall between Politicians and Civil Servants………and the ummmm…….politicians shouldn't meddle with the work of civil servants and to some extent, it becomes an issue in ummmm….immigration matters which are on the practical level in Finland decided by Migri…….- which is the immigration authority…..so we politicians we define the laws, we write them, we change them but the implementation is done by Migri….✓✓✓but ummm… and in all, decisions is a matter of interpreting the law….and ummm…even though the criteria are supposed to be objective, they end up being subjective…..and of course Migri acts quite independently and as I see its quite subjective. So even if this government has tried to ummmm….to somehow open up our immigration policy a little bit, on the practical level, not much has changed because there is a "such culture" inside Migri that is ummm…resilient to change….But as far as the law process goes, in Parliament, I mean we have Committees that take care of different things and the migration committee is called the Administrative Committee in parliament….and they define ummmm…. they handle the legislative proposal that are dealing with migration……ummmm….this period, there has been some changes as far as for example, the representation of immigrant in the process, they are now going to have support and better representation in general which in a way should make up for……..should make it easier…should lead to better results, better decisions but not much outside of that so yes in general, the administrative committee ummm….they work through the proposals given by the government and then they are approved of course by the General

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Assembly in parliament. So that's pretty much the process but in the big picture, of course immigration is that dividing topic in Finland too as in many countries….and this government too is now……as far as coalitions go, pretty much the most immigration friendly they could be and the opposition is like a fairly conservative and to some extent the most immigration hostile party in parliament. So in that sense, as far as immigration reforms go, the political situation is as good as it gets but ummmm.. the biggest party in opposition, the so called "Finns Party"….. is a populist party as the …..(inaudible message) or Sari Demokratina of the same kind and they are growing in popularity which of course puts pressure on those parties that feels like their support is threatened….

------- Ummm.. No! The chairman of the committee is a member of the True Finns but in general I mean, the government has a majority in the administrative committee…… but even so ummm….the committee isn't very progressive on these issues……… No! not a question of prolonging the process….. but somehow the culture of the committee is such that it ummmm…often reaches ummm….unanimous results, which means that it's a result that is also accepted by the True Finns…… which means that it's a result that is skewed towards the views of the True Finns…. so the general culture of the committee is not very friendly to immigration…..

Finnish MP 2

6-------Ummm…to some extent yes but mostly its coming back to what I said earlier about the kind of division between the political things, politicians and authorities so like for example I can ask from umm….as MP interacting with the officials and authorities and it is good to kind of hear them ummm…informally what should have been done but if I want to change some umm…process of policy, I have to go through the government so then I would ask the or direct my actions towards the responsible Ministry…….. which then has the ummmmm….the responsibility to politically act on it. So as an MP, I cannot go and say that the ummm….the Border Guard do this and that……… that's not how it goes…Ummm did you ask something about the EU? Umm…specifically influencing in the EU……….

--------ummm the Grand Committee has no role...so any….some national policies….if it's the immigration policy, it is the Administrative Committee that voice their opinions and that's decided in the parliament and in the general plenary…mmmm….but the EU policy is different, here ummm the other committees, the Administrative Committee, Commerce Committee, they give their statement to the Grand Committee **(Coded 5 as well)…….** the Grand Committee then issues a final opinion or statement that binds the government to act

in a certain way. So ummm…so that's a bit different but that's only regarding ummm…EU policy………..

--------Ummm….now…ummmm…..I don't remember how it exactly went in 2015….basically it should go through exactly the same procedure every time ummmm…..unless there are exceptional conditions such as now with COVID19…..but of course if it's a more ummmm…..like time pressure, then things can happen in a more fast pace. The government can make a quicker…..inform the Grand Committee and parliament in a quicker way and they can then proceed….process it quicker and so on….so the same official process can be done at a faster pace if needed. And sometimes this create….I don't remember in 2015 but sometimes this goes through the kind of ummmm… you will end up with decisions where some people question whether the government has stretched its mandate too far or something like this but ummm….its stupid like considering the kind of debate ummmm….. One institution I did not mentioned beforehand is of course the President of ummmm……Finland………who….in general does not have power over internal affairs but his power is in the foreign and security policy and this is a debate….ongoing debate in Finland about what is, according to the current constitution, what should be the role of the president in ummmm, EU policy………and our president, the current president has been so much active in the topic of ummm….immigration policies and so one….so, ummmm….it depends on who you ask whether this is something that should concern him or not, or he should have something to say or not, but technically he is not in ummmm…internal affairs which EU affairs …….somewhat in-between the internal and external ummm…so what his role is in this….but his been there regarding the theme….he's been talking about it very actively………yeah but ummm in Finland it still has….we have quite a lot of ummm…the previous constitution gave the president a lot of power and the current constitution stripped a lot of the power away but we still…..well, its still ongoing debate of where the actual limit of which stuff he can ummmm….he should or can influence directly and of course he can express his opinions and his a very popular president …..(inaudible)….so he is an important institution in this whole big picture………..