



The Welfare State in Competition for Global Talent

From National Protectionism
to Regional Connectivity –
the Case of Finland

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Preface

We hope that this book adds some new insights to the increasing discussion about labour migration. Although the literature of the field is already rather substantial, it most often deals with South-North brain drain or issues concerning the traditional talent magnet countries like the USA and Australia, or other major migrant destinations like Germany or the UK. The dynamics and special features of small, competitive, welfare states are rarely discussed in detail. Regional economic development and development policies also acquire a new flavour when individuals and human talent, instead of firms and investments, are attracted. The consequences of this are not only economic, but also social and political in various ways. One stimulant to this book was the observation that the policies focusing on the regional development and migration of highly skilled people are converging in the global innovation economy.

The empirical focus of the book lies in the Finland of the early 3rd millennium. This period of time is significant, because it provides a view to the phase in which Finland as a welfare state with its highly competitive economy and a leading-edge ICT sector seemed to be a bystander in terms of global talent flows. While global labour flows, including highly-skilled people, always follow the economic development to some extent, there are also countries, or rather regions within countries, that have created rather strong transnational or global networks and communities between them and a global pool of talent. There are negative and positive aspects in these relations, but especially interesting is the scarcity of those networks and communities from a region where cutting-edge research, world-leading ICT technology, welfare state and a competitive economy locate.

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