

# Researcher Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland

## EVALUATION REPORT

# SYREENI



ACADEMY OF FINLAND

# Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland EVALUATION REPORT

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Layout: PixPoint ky

ISBN 951-715-510-7 (print)

ISBN 951-715-511-5 (pdf)

ISSN 0358-9153

Painopörssi Oy, Helsinki, Finland 2004

# Kuvailulehti

<b>Julkaisija</b>	Suomen Akatemia	<b>Päivämäärä</b>	17.09.2004
<b>Tekijä(t)</b>	Syrjäytyminen, eriarvoisuus ja etniset suhteet Suomessa -tutkimusohjelman arviointipaneeli Liisa Rantalaiho, Ulf Hedetoft, John Solomos		
<b>Julkaisun nimi</b>	Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland EVALUATION REPORT		
<b>Tiivistelmä</b>	<p>1990-luku oli Suomessa suurten muutosten aikaa. Siihen mahtui lama, Euroopan unioniin liittyminen ja nopea taloudellinen nousu. Suomi kansainvälistyi ja tuli entistä monikulttuurisemmaksi. Perinteisten vähemmistöjen, kuten ruotsinkielisten, saamelaisten, romanien, tataarien ja juutalaisten rinnalla naapurimaista Venäjältä ja Virosta tulleiden määrä kasvoi. Pakolaisia ja turvapaikanhakijoitakin oli entistä enemmän, vaikka moniin muihin Euroopan maihin verrattuna määrä pysyi pienenä.</p> <p>Rasismien ja muukalaisvihamielisyyden ilmiöitä alkoi esiintyä Suomessakin. Näihin haluttiin tarttua kuitenkin heti myös tutkimuksen keinoin. Tästä opetusministeriö ja Suomen Akatemia sopivat vuonna 1997.</p> <p>Suomen Akatemian käsittelyssä aihe laajeni Syreeni -tutkimusohjelmaksi, joka käsitti syrjäytymisen, eriarvoisuuden ja etniset suhteet. Ohjelmaan valittiin 21 tutkimusprojektia ja ohjelman johtajaksi nimitettiin dosentti Vesa Puuronen Joensuun yliopistosta. Ohjelmakausi ajoittui vuosille 2001-2003.</p> <p>Vuoden 2003 lopussa päättynyt Syreeni -tutkimusohjelma on nyt arvioitu. Arvioinnin suoritti kolmihenkinen kansainvälinen asiantuntijapaneeli, jonka puheenjohtajana oli professori (emerita) Liisa Rantalaiho (Tampereen yliopisto) ja jäseninä professorit Ulf Hedetoft (Aalborg Univeristy) ja John Solomos (City University, London). Asiantuntijasihteerinä oli professori Leena Eräsaari (Tampereen yliopisto).</p> <p>Arviointipaneelin vastattavaksi asetettiin monia tutkimusohjelmaan liittyviä kysymyksiä, joihin paneeli huolellisesti paneutui. Tämän lisäksi raportissa esitetään Suomen Akatemialle lukuisia käytännön parannusehdotuksia, joiden avulla tutkimusohjelmien toimivuutta ja kansainvälisyyttä edelleen vahvistettaisiin.</p>		
<b>Asiasanat</b>	syrjäytyminen, eriarvoisuus, etniset suhteet		
<b>Julkaisusarjan nimi ja numero</b>	Suomen Akatemian julkaisuja 3/04		
<b>ISSN</b>	0358-9153		
<b>ISBN</b>	Painetulle kirjalle annettu tunnus 951-715-510-7	Pdf-versiolle annettu tunnus 951-715-511-5	
<b>Sivumäärä</b>	25		
<b>Julkaisun jakaja</b>	Suomen Akatemia, PL 99, 00501 Helsinki		
<b>Julkaisun kustantaja</b>	Suomen Akatemia		
<b>Painopaikka ja -aika</b>	Painopörssi, Helsinki 2004		
<b>Muut tiedot</b>			

## Description

<b>Publisher</b>	Academy of Finland	Date	17.09.2004
<b>Author(s)</b>	Evaluation Panel of the Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland: Liisa Rantalaaho, Ulf Hedetoft, John Solomos		
<b>Title</b>	Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland EVALUATION REPORT		
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>During the 1990s Finland witnessed increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers as well as former expatriates moving into the country. Even though the number of foreign nationals in Finland still does not exceed 100.000, the change has nevertheless been rapid. The number of immigrants in Finland is quite small in comparison with other members of the European Union. However, the number of people moving to Finland is bound to increase in the future as a result of the continuing process of globalisation. In spite of the relatively small numbers of immigrants, Finnish society has considerable difficulties in providing jobs and housing for these people. The problems are further compounded by racism and xenophobia.</p> <p>In autumn 1997 the Academy of Finland Research Council for Culture and Society launched a background study to overview the current status of research on racism and xenophobia in Finland. At the time the Academy of Finland and the Ministry of Education were negotiating an agreement that the Academy should devote special attention to research that can reveal the underlying causes of racism and xenophobia and help to eradicate them.</p> <p>The number of projects finally chosen to the Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland for the years 2001-03 is 21. The projects involved altogether twenty different university departments or research institutions.</p> <p>After the end of the funding for the programme at the end of 2003, the programme has been evaluated in 2004. The international evaluation panel included professor (emerita) Liisa Rantalaaho (University of Tampere) as the Chair, and professor Ulf Hedetoft (University of Aalborg) and professor John Solomos (City University, London) as members, as well as professor Leena Eräsaari (University of Tampere) as the Expert Secretary of the panel. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.</p>		
<b>Key words</b>	marginalisation, inequality, ethnic relations		
<b>Name and number of series</b>	Publications of the Academy of Finland 3/04		
<b>ISSN</b>	0358-9153		
<b>ISBN</b>	Print 951-715-510-7	Pdf 951-715-511-5	
<b>Number of pages</b>	25		
<b>Distributed by</b>	Academy of Finland, POB 99, FI-00501 Helsinki		
<b>Published by</b>	Academy of Finland		
<b>Place and date of printing</b>	Painopörssi, 2004		
<b>Other information</b>			

# Esipuhe

1990-luku oli Suomessa suurten muutosten aikaa. Siihen mahtui lama, Euroopan unioniin liittyminen ja nopea taloudellinen nousu. Suomi kansainvälistyi ja tuli entistä monikulttuurisemmaksi. Perinteisten vähemmistöjen, kuten ruotsinkielisten, saamelaisten, romanien, tataarien ja juutalaisten rinnalla naapurimaista Venäjältä ja Virosta tulleiden määrä kasvoi. Pakolaisia ja turvapaikanhakijoitakin oli entistä enemmän, vaikka moniin muihin Euroopan maihin verrattuna määrä pysyi pienenä.

Rasismien ja muukalaisvihamielisyyden ilmiöitä alkoi esiintyä Suomessakin. Näihin haluttiin tarttua kuitenkin heti myös tutkimuksen keinoin. Tästä opetusministeriö ja Suomen Akatemia sopivat vuonna 1997.

Suomen Akatemian käsittelyssä aihe laajeni Syreeni -tutkimusohjelmaksi, joka käsitti syrjäytymisen, eriarvoisuuden ja etniset suhteet. Ohjelmaan valittiin 21 tutkimusprojektia ja ohjelman johtajaksi nimitettiin dosentti Vesa Puuronen Joensuun yliopistosta. Ohjelmakausi ajoittui vuosille 2001-2003.

Vuoden 2003 lopussa päättynyt Syreeni -tutkimusohjelma on nyt arvioitu. Arvioinnin suoritti kolmihenkinen kansainvälinen asiantuntijapaneeli, jonka puheenjohtajana oli professori (emerita) Liisa Rantalaiho (Tampereen yliopisto) ja jäseninä professorit Ulf Hedetoft (Aalborg Univeristy) ja John Solomos (City University, London). Asiantuntijasihteerinä oli professori Leena Eräsaari (Tampereen yliopisto).

Arviointipaneelin vastattavaksi asetettiin monia tutkimusohjelmaan liittyviä kysymyksiä, joihin paneeli huolellisesti paneutui. Tämän lisäksi raportissa esitetään Suomen Akatemialle lukuisia käytännön parannusehdotuksia, joiden avulla tutkimusohjelmien toimivuutta ja kansainvälisyyttä edelleen vahvistettaisiin.

Terttu Utriainen

ohjelmaryhmän puheenjohtaja  
Kulttuurin ja yhteiskunnan tutkimuksen toimikunta



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# 1. Introduction

During the 1990s Finland witnessed increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers as well as former expatriates moving into the country. Even though the number of foreign nationals in Finland still does not exceed 100.000, the change has nevertheless been rapid. The number of immigrants in Finland is quite small in comparison with other members of the European Union. However, the number of people moving to Finland is bound to increase in the future as a result of the continuing process of globalisation. In spite of the relatively small numbers of immigrants, Finnish society has considerable difficulties in providing jobs and housing for these people. The problems are further compounded by racism and xenophobia.

Although arrival of ethnic minorities in Finland is a relatively new phenomenon, there are some historical ethnic minorities, such as the Swedish-speaking minority, the Lapps, Romanies, Tatars and Jews. Neither the researchers nor the media have shown much interest in their experiences of exclusion. An ethnic background corresponding with a high level of unemployment and a low income level has received little attention, and neither has the fact that ethnic minorities are excluded from political decision-making processes.

In the early 1990s Finland endured a period of severe economic recession, perhaps the deepest economic recession in the country's history. Unemployment figures consequently climbed to record-high levels, and national debt increased rapidly in spite of cutbacks in public expenditure. Government subsidies to local authorities for the provision of social and welfare services and education were dramatically reduced, and many authorities ran into serious financial difficulties. However, the end of the 1990s was marked by strong economic growth. Nevertheless, inequality and marginalisation are still present in Finnish society.

Finland joined the European Union as a full member at the beginning of 1995. During the membership the country's GDP has grown rapidly. Yet the number of unemployed has been decreasing only very slowly. Membership of the European Union has speeded up the process of structural change in Finland, at least in agricultural production. Migration from the rural areas into the few growing urban centres is still proceeding. As a result of the loss of jobs in agriculture and the continuing migration, marked contrasts in development prospects have opened up between different parts of the country.

The Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland has used the Finnish name of SYREENI, an acronym for the Finnish title *Syrjäytyminen, eriarvoisuus ja etniset suhteet Suomessa*. Since it is an important aim for the research programmes of the Academy of Finland to launch research on subjects and areas that have great importance for the society at large, these research topics were considered highly significant.

## **2. The SYREENI Programme**

### **2.1. Objectives**

The Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland covers problem areas that are deemed to be of both national and international significance. The aim of the programme is to strengthen research on marginalisation, inequality and ethnic relations, to establish a scientific tradition in these fields of study and to bring together existing research capacities in a more concerted effort. In addition, the programme aims to raise the overall standard of research, to create a solid knowledge base in this field and to upgrade research training, especially in the field of ethnic relations. It is considered important that the projects selected to partake in the programme form a coherent system that can generate significant synergy benefits. The objectives of the research programme were summed up as follows:

- to produce research evidence on problem areas of national and/or international significance
- to bring together existing research capacities
- to promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research
- to improve co-operation between funders, researchers and end users of the research results
- to give greater international visibility to Finnish research
- to produce results that have practical applicability

### **2.2. Preparation and organisation**

In autumn 1997 the Academy of Finland Research Council for Culture and Society launched a background study to overview the current status of research on racism and xenophobia in Finland.

At the time the Academy of Finland and the Ministry of Education were negotiating an agreement that the Academy should devote special attention to research that can reveal the underlying causes of racism and xenophobia and help to eradicate them.

In spring 1998 the Research Council hosted a seminar with invited experts on "Racism and ethnic relations". In December the same year the Academy appointed a working group to consider whether the larger themes of multiculturalism and social inequality could be added to the themes of racism and ethnic relations. The working group suggested a research programme on the subject "Democracy, Marginalisation and Inequality".

In spring 1999 the Research Council for Culture and Society agreed with the Academy that a research programme be set up under the title "Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland". At the meeting in April 1999 the Board decided to provide funding for a three-year programme from 2001 to 2003. In September the

same year the Research Council for Culture and Society appointed a preliminary group to prepare for the appointment of a steering group. An exploratory workshop was organised in Tampere in November 1999. In December of that year the Academy of Finland invited other institutions and organisations to discuss their interest in funding the programme.

In December 1999 the Research Council for Culture and Society appointed a steering group for the programme. Professor Terttu Utriainen from the University of Lapland acted as chair of the group. The steering group selected the Karelian Institute, a research institute at the University of Joensuu, to act as a co-ordinating organisation, and docent Vesa Puuronen from the University of Joensuu was appointed Programme Manager. This was the first time a research programme of the Finnish Academy appointed a full time co-ordinator. The co-ordination contract was signed between the Academy of Finland and the University of Joensuu. The co-ordinator worked full-time from December 1<sup>st</sup> 1999 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2003, with an extension of three months after the programme ended.

The steering group acted as an executive group for the research programme and was responsible for the application process and for monitoring the implementation of the individual projects. The steering group has met twice a year.

### **2.3. Selection of the projects**

The research projects were chosen through a two-stage application procedure. The deadline for preliminary proposals was in January 2000. Projects selected to the second round were invited to submit full applications in March-May 2000. During the first round, project proposals were reviewed by a steering group, and the final decisions were made on the steering group's recommendations by the Research Council. The applications proper were reviewed by a panel of outside experts; the Council made the final funding decisions in November 2000.

The Academy received 73 applications for the first round. Approximately one half of the applications were selected for the second round. The number of projects finally chosen to the Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland is 21. The projects involved altogether twenty different university departments or research institutions. (See Appendix 1: List of research projects and institutions).

### **2.4. Evaluation process**

The evaluation of the Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic relations in Finland is based on the following documents:

Programme Memorandum

Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland. 2000-2003.

Extended abstracts 2001, 133p.

Extended abstracts 2002, 144p.

Extended abstracts 2003, 182p.

Vesa Puuronen: Report of Programme Manager. April 2004.

A book manuscript: New Challenges for a Welfare Society, 2004. Ed. by Vesa Puuronen. (An edited collection of research articles by SYREENI researchers).

Programmes and memoranda of the seminars held once a year.

The evaluation panel met in Helsinki, Finland, on May 9th-11th, 2004.

Riitta Launonen, Science Advisor of the Academy of Finland, participated in some of the discussions and kindly provided some extra material for the panel. The panel also met with and interviewed both the SYREENI Programme Manager, Dr. Vesa Puuronen, Karelian Institute, University of Joensuu and Research Director Tom Sandlund, Swedish School of Social Science, who is a member of the programme's steering group.

The tasks of the evaluation board were expressed in the letter of invitation received by the panellists, stating that the programme should be assessed as a whole with an emphasis on the following issues:

1. Academic and scientific quality of the research programme
2. Success in implementing the goals and objectives of the SYREENI programme
3. Contribution of the programme to researcher and expert training
4. Collaboration and networking within the programme
5. Relevance and applicability of research results
6. Future recommendations

The members of the panel discussed the aforementioned issues. All members of the panel read detailed summaries of all the projects, a selection of publications and an overview of the work of the Programme.

## **3. Evaluation of the Programme**

### **3.1. Functioning of the Programme**

The SYREENI research programme consists of 21 research projects from diverse disciplines and institutions. There are projects from anthropology, art education, education, ethnology, history, law, women's studies, sociology, social policy, social work and social psychology. All major Finnish universities have been involved in the programme. Besides the universities, a couple of other research institutions have also housed some of the projects involved in the programme. The latter include organisations like the Finnish Youth Research Network, STAKES (the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health), the Rehabilitation Foundation, and the City of Helsinki Urban Facts centre. In terms of organisation, management and coordination this means a huge variation in institutional practises and presents a considerable organisational challenge.

When the preparation of the SYREENI programme began, the original idea was to launch research that can reveal the underlying causes of racism and xenophobia and help eradicate them. However, the final title, "Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland", sought to include three separate themes within the programme. These three themes are too ambitious to be integrated fully into a single research programme.

Some areas of research are covered well by the programme whereas others are missing altogether. This is due to the wide range of objectives, diverse topics and the selection process of the research projects. The projects were chosen from amongst the ones that sent applications, and chosen according to the quality of research and not, for example, the subject of the research. Thus coverage of the various aspects of the programme is somewhat haphazard, especially in respect of general marginalisation processes.

During the years 2001-2003 the research projects were composed of a variety of participants with different statuses and appointments. The annual number of researchers involved in the programme varied but always exceeded one hundred. About one fifth of the research projects were given the full amount of money they originally applied for. Thus most of the projects had to come up with different ways of cutting their expenses. The yearly statistics of the programme reveal that only 27 per cent of researchers appointed by the projects worked full-time and round the year; during the last year of the programme the percentage dropped to 21 (Appendix 2).

The Programme organised three two-day seminars planned for the participants. In 2001, the first year of the programme, some 40 out of the total of 110 researchers took part in the seminar. The second year 2002, the number of participants was 86 and the third year around 60. Thus roughly one half or more of the researchers took part in the joint seminars.

The main objective of the first meeting in Mekrijärvi, 2001 was to present the

researchers and their project plans to each other and to give an opportunity for networking within the programme. The seminar discussed future events of the programme and decided to have annual seminars for the whole programme plus smaller project seminars. The co-ordinator also suggested a shared course in methodology, but the projects did not support the idea.

The second conference in Tampere, 2002 included visits from two international experts. Professor Peter Fitzpatrick from the University of London School of Law lectured on "The Humanity of Rights" and Assistant Professor Denise Ferreira da Silva from the University of California Department of Ethnic Studies lectured on "Re-Inscribing the Institutions of the Racial in the Erasures of Being: A Critique of the Socio-Logos of Justice". During the 2002 seminar 6 working groups also met, presenting altogether 38 papers and presentations. Some of the working groups managed to create discussions that went beyond the borders of individual projects. There were also three meetings that aimed for common publications.

The last SYREENI seminar in Helsinki, 2003 invited Professor Philomena Essed from the University of Amsterdam to speak on "Race, Gender and Durable Injustices: The Problem of Cultural Cloning". Lectures and working groups were again held by many of the researchers in the programme. The conference was partly an internal evaluation of the SYREENI programme and a time for sketching out its future research and planning for publications.

The SYREENI programme has also used a mailing list (e-mail) through which information was passed on to the projects and discussions held on different topics. It also has a homepage ([www.joensuu.fi/syreeni](http://www.joensuu.fi/syreeni)) to present itself to the wider public.

### **3.2. Funding and timetables**

The Academy of Finland provided 4.3 million Euros for the programme in 2000-2003, external funding from the ministries and other governmental institutions made up an additional 0.5 million Euros. This money was shared among the 21 projects participating in the programme, and since only two of them got the money they applied for, and many even got but a half or a third of it, they had to start by planning the research anew. As the individual projects make themselves new plans and cut their expenses, problems and conflicts may arise within the projects as well as between the numerous projects in the programme. The projects' resources tend to get divided amongst the project members in a manner that promotes short research periods and leaves individual researchers unable to focus on their work full-time. With more than a hundred individual researchers participating in the programme, cutting down the budgets meant that researchers worked either part-time or part year, or both. The number of researchers doing full-time research during the whole programme period seems to be very small indeed.

As the main idea of the research programmes of the Academy of Finland is to bring researchers, disciplines and topics together to create synergy, i.e. something new and more innovative, the cuts in the budget will rather prevent than promote the fulfilment of these goals. Thus the reduced funding was not only a handicap to

the programme but may even have worked against some of its objectives. Instead of cutting the resources of the individual projects the Academy could have chosen fewer projects. If unable to do this, the Academy could take more responsibility for the reductions, instead of leaving the negotiations to the individual projects and/or project leaders. The co-ordinator and/or steering group could also be of use in negotiating cuts in the projects' budgets. Perhaps the members of the panel of outside experts who recommended the projects for the programme in the first place could also play a role in negotiating financial cuts. Since they are familiar with the applications, they might also be able to make recommendations concerning collaboration between the projects.

The co-ordination resources covered mainly the salaries of the co-ordinator and a part-time secretary. The co-ordinator's budget also included an international and national travel grant and money for inviting guest lecturers. There was also an amount of money budgeted for information, both within and outside the programme. This funding proved insufficient for such ambitious goals as the promotion of interdisciplinary research and internationality. This is particularly important in dealing with a field of research that has a relatively short history in Finland, but has long-standing international traditions. One of the functions of the co-ordinator is "to promote the co-ordination between the research projects and the creation of international contacts" – but if the co-ordinator has little money to do this, it seems almost as if the Academy of Finland is not taking its aims seriously. Creation of international contacts is extremely time-consuming and in practice requires travelling costs for international visitors, project participants and the coordinator.

Several previous evaluations of the Academy programmes have stated that three years is too short a time. The policy concerning the programmes has been altered and in the future the programmes will last four years. When taking into consideration the different and diverse objectives of the SYREENI programme on the whole, a period of three years was simply not enough. An ideal time for a programme like SYREENI might be five years.

### **3.3. Coordination**

The role of the co-ordinator in a programme as large as SYREENI is of vital importance. This was partly understood when a full-time Programme Manager was nominated by the Academy of Finland – for the first time in its history.

The co-ordinator took part in the preparation of the SYREENI programme by writing the programme memorandum and by participating in organising the selection of the research projects. His tasks during the preparation stage were "to participate" and "to help". His involvement in the preparation and the selection of the programme was thus somewhat unspecified.

In practice monitoring the research projects in the SYREENI programme meant yearly-collected evaluation forms. These were put together and published as extended abstracts. All of the research projects received copies of these abstracts, which the steering group went through as well. Nobody seems to have put this information



to any common use, however. The co-ordinator and the steering group could have used these abstracts in monitoring the individual projects more closely and actually giving them feedback on their progress. The role of the co-ordinator should have included closer discussions and keeping track of the individual projects.

The steering group may be an insufficient resource for the co-ordinator, particularly since its members may change during the programme's course and the meetings take place only twice a year.

There might also be need for organising a kind of "programme board". This would be a group consisting of some of the project leaders and it would be a permanent group. Such an organ would help, first of all, in discussing the cuts and budgets. The programme board could also monitor and follow up on the progress reports of the projects.

### **3.4. Contribution to research training**

One of the objectives of the research programme was to develop specific fields of study in order to raise the standard of research and to upgrade research training, particularly in research on ethnic relations. The selection criteria of the projects therefore included plans for research training. Thus the projects in the programme had graduate students, PhD students and senior researchers, mixed in varying "ratios" depending on the project. In the first year of the programme, i.e. 2001, the programme employed 53 researchers, 25 of whom were doctoral students. The approximate amount of doctoral students varies annually between one third and a half of all the researchers involved in the project. The overall impression of the evaluation panel was that the amount of doctoral students was too high, especially in the light of the ambitious objectives of the programme.

The relative amount of senior and junior researchers is, however, difficult to estimate on the basis of the documents held by the Academy, because the projects do not report it in a systematic way. Some of the research projects state researcher training as one of their aims from the beginning, a few others label the researchers involved according to their status as doctoral students and/or postdoctoral students. The majority of the projects do not state the number of doctoral students and other researchers. Furthermore, quite a few of the doctoral students counted as members of the research projects actually received funding from other sources. Many of them had started their dissertations before the programme, and received their salaries from several sources during the programme, etc.

The joint annual seminars were the main training activities organised by the SYREENI programme. Many of the projects participating in the programme have also organised conferences and workshops of their own, or been co-organisers and attended several other national and international conferences. The programme co-ordinator allocated some of the money at his disposal to individual projects for workshops and seminars. For the doctoral students, the main part of the teaching and learning has obviously taken place within their own disciplines and "home institutions". The main responsibility in researcher training was left to the individual

projects, and the reported amount of teaching and supervision provided to the graduate and postgraduate students differs from one project to the other. Some PhD students seem to act as if by themselves, but the impression may be due to the manner of reporting.

During the third year of the programme, hardly any of the PhD students who started at the beginning of the programme were finished, some researchers just got their MA degrees and some finished their licentiate theses. Many projects state that their members will complete their PhD theses during 2004. A period of three years is far too short for finishing a PhD. Most of the doctoral theses in the SYREENI programme will, therefore, be finished after the programme has elapsed. It is thus too early to evaluate the full impact of the programme on researcher training.

### **3.5. Collaboration and networking**

The SYREENI programme was the first occasion for researchers of ethnic relations to communicate and form networks in Finland on a larger scale. The progress made by these researchers can be seen, for example, in the various workshops organised by the different projects. Some joint publications were also planned and put underway, and are now on their way to being published. The researchers of ethnic relations used the opportunity to form contacts at a national level more effectively than the researchers of equality and marginality, who already had more established networks. A notable achievement is a bi-lingual (Finnish-Swedish) association, ETMU ("*Etnisten suhteiden ja kansainvälisten muuttoliikkeiden tutkimuksen seura*") that was established in order to promote contacts and co-operation between researchers and others interested in ethnic relations and international migration. The association has already more than one hundred members. Without a doubt, the SYREENI programme has thus helped in forming contacts within the national context.

One of the programme's objectives was to bring together existing research capacities. Some of the research projects formed a "consortium" from the very beginning, and consequently had a joint interest in collaboration. A minor portion of the projects also had researchers with minority ethnic backgrounds. Though these projects were few, they may be a start for communication between the Finnish researcher community and researchers with minority backgrounds.

One of the objectives of the programme was to give greater international visibility to research. In this respect the achievements of the SYREENI programme appear lesser than in the national context. The programme as a whole had but little resources to support international travel. Some of the projects had very good connections to international research, conferences as well as high-standard publications. Such success with international contacts is most likely due to the leaders or senior researchers with previous contacts. One of the obvious gaps in this respect was a missing link between the SYREENI researchers and research on ethnic relations carried out in North America. There are very strong traditions of studying ethnic relations both in USA and in Canada. Connections should have been created with these significant research traditions and also with the other Nordic countries where these themes are studied extensively.

Another objective of the programme was its aim to promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research. Again, the achievements of the different projects vary a great deal. A few projects seem to have been quite successful in this respect, whereas most of the projects performed modestly. The results of the programme itself in promoting co-operation between disciplines and subjects were modest. In a research programme with such ambitious width as SYREENI there might have been some need for joint courses and workshops that are focused on the theoretical ideas, objectives and goals of the whole programme.

Relevant networking partners, especially on the side of research on marginalisation, might also have been found in the other large programmes of the Research Council for Culture and Society, such as the programmes for Urban Studies (1998-2001), Economic Crisis in Finland during the 1990's (1998-2001), or Ageing (2000-2002). The role of the programme co-ordinator could also be made to include active co-operation with other relevant research programmes.

### **3.6. Academic and Scientific Quality**

Evaluation of the academic or scientific quality of the programme was mainly based on the extended abstracts and a book manuscript titled "New Challenges for a Welfare Society, 2004", edited by Vesa Puuronen. Besides the manuscript, the panel had access to the list of publications by all the projects, and as a sample looked at some books and articles. The majority of the listed publications were in Finnish. On the evidence available to the evaluation panel, it found all the research projects by themselves relevant in scientific terms, although two or three seemed not to fit very well in the context of the SYREENI programme.

The quantity of research varies a great deal. Some projects engaged in multiple activities and produced numerous publications (in Finnish and English) continuously. At the other end, two projects published nothing during the course of the programme, although these projects have promised publications during 2004.

The quality of the projects varies, too. Most of the projects are of reasonable standard. Some five or six of the projects, however, deliver considerably more than could be expected. All these published texts in Finnish, Swedish and English and in recognised national and international publications. They had good publication records, they reported their annual progress accurately, offered information about the research process, had international contacts, and some even had practical consequences. Their performance can be rated excellent by any international standards.

Two projects particularly stand out, i.e. the projects on "Muslims and Religious Equality in Finland" and "Beyond Marginalisation and Exclusion". These excellent projects are theoretically innovative, have produced new empirical data and are methodologically sound.

The joint publication edited by the programme coordinator is of a good quality and encapsulates well the main focus areas and some of the major findings of the

programme. The manuscript also points to the fact that the individual projects became more involved in the programme in the final phase.

A common feature shared by the best projects seems to be that the project leaders were themselves involved in the projects as researchers. Consequently, the panel suggests that the Academy of Finland should pay particular attention to the active role of project leaders and to the right balance of experienced researchers and junior scholars. The tasks of the project leaders or other senior researchers should also be articulated clearly in the planning and implementation phases of the projects.

### **3.7. Relevance and applicability of the results**

The impact of the programme on Finnish society at large is difficult to evaluate. The original idea in planning the SYREENI programme was to concentrate on ethnic relations and racism. Had this happened, it might have been possible to design a programme with clear ideas concerning the dialogue between the research and the society at large.

One general objective of the Academy's research programmes is to improve the co-operation between the funders, researchers and finally the users of the research results. Quite a few of the projects have tried – in various ways – to have an effect with respect to end users, and several individual projects have been quite successful in projecting themselves publicly through the media. Many of the projects have collaborated with minority or ethnic groups, and some of them have also made a contribution to educating lawyers, teachers and social workers etc. Some projects have even participated in the legislation process. On the other hand, there was no clearly identifiable dissemination or public projection strategy for the programme as a whole.

### **3.8. Added value of the programme**

Added value gained from the programme is evaluated against its general aims. The objectives of the programme were:

- to produce research evidence on problem areas of national and/or international significance
- to bring together existing research capacities
- to promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research
- to improve co-operation between funders, researchers and end users of the research results
- to give greater international visibility to research
- to produce results that have practical applicability

The shared impression of the evaluation panel was that the SYREENI programme has achieved a great deal in a short time. The SYREENI programme has funded a number of studies that have done much to develop substantive knowledge and expertise on the core issues of marginalisation, inequality and especially ethnic relations. The SYREENI programme has certainly contributed to the research on ethnic relations on a national level, the scientific impact on an international level, however, is

less substantial. Many of the individual projects have performed extremely well in terms of scientific and research goals. Yet the objectives of the programme are over-ambitious compared to its resources. Combining such big issues as ethnic relations, marginalisation and equality would be a task more suitable for a well-funded top research unit.

Altogether, the programme has succeeded in bringing together existing research capacities, although it seems that the researchers of marginality and equality did not use the opportunities as well as the researchers of ethnic relations. A new kind of academic community has emerged among the researchers of ethnicity in Finland in consequence of the SYREENI programme.

The programme was not all that successful in promoting multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research but, on the other hand, the time may not yet be right for evaluating this. Since many of the junior researchers in the programme have now in any case participated in multidisciplinary research during their so-called formative years, the effects of interdisciplinarity may be seen in the days to come.

It is difficult to evaluate the significance of the programme as a whole on improving co-operation between funders, researchers and end users of research results. If the SYREENI programme was, nevertheless, intended as a joint effort between academic and societal actors and interests, it should have been clearly stated in the programme memorandum. Nevertheless, several projects have collaborated extensively with different types of institutions as well as social and political actors. The programme also seems to have succeeded in creating a new kind of visibility to some of the researched areas, especially the field of ethnic relations in Finland.

The SYREENI programme has made theoretical and practical advances in the field. It has therefore made a difference in academia as well as in society more generally – especially with respect to questions of ethnicity.

## **4. Future recommendations**

### **Programme design**

In drafting a research programme the Academy should be careful not to expand its scope too much. A programme with two or more separate themes requires careful planning if its objectives are to be fulfilled. If the programmes are composed of different themes, its focal point should be the interaction or the link between these themes, and this should be one of the criteria of choosing between project applications. The objectives of a programme concerning its desired social impact should also be clearly specified.

### **Funding**

It is often the case that the funding for the programme is considerably less than the amount of the chosen projects' applications. In that situation, instead of cutting the resources of the individual projects the Academy might choose fewer projects. If reductions do need to be made, the Academy should take more responsibility in the negotiations, instead of leaving those to the individual projects and/or project leaders. The steering group, the coordinator or the outside expert panels who are familiar with the applications, might be used to help in the process.

Since interdisciplinarity, interaction between the research groups within the programme, and creation of international contacts are important objectives of research programmes, adequate funding should be reserved for these purposes on programme level, to be used by the coordinator.

### **Management and co-ordination:**

The Academy of Finland should strengthen the role of the co-ordinator in programmes of this size. There should be clear guidelines to the role of the coordinator, specifying issues such as areas in which co-operation among the projects is needed (theory, concepts, methodology, publication of results etc.), as well as the status and authority of the coordinator. All in all, the role and tasks of the co-ordinator should be conceived and planned in more concrete terms.

The panel also recommends that the Academy of Finland should consider organising for example a board of managers, consisting of some of the project leaders, to help the coordinator in a large and multifaceted research programme.

The Academy should also try to conceive of more effective ways for promoting scientific interaction between the various programmes it launches. Most of the coordinators of large-scale research programmes have not acted in such a role before, and it is important to them to have information, advice and experience from previous and on-going programmes. Contacts between programme coordinators should be systematically organised on both academic and organisational grounds.

## **Project leadership**

One of the keys to a successful research project seems to be a qualified leader who is actively involved in the project. Consequently, the panel suggests that the Academy of Finland should direct project funding in such a way that project leaders personally are able to participate in the research as members of the group.

## **Researcher training**

One stated task of a researcher programme is researcher training. Considering the relative amount of senior and junior researchers involved in projects, the panel feels that the issue should be considered carefully in the planning stage in order to prevent the Academy programmes from turning into graduate schools.

Researcher training during the programme period should be monitored more closely by the Academy. To begin with, it would be necessary to document the doctoral students in the projects and follow up on their progress in a more visible and systematic way in the annual reports. The Academy should also monitor the completion of dissertations.

# Appendix 1

## MARGINALISATION, INEQUALITY AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN FINLAND (SYREENI) RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2001-03

### FUNDING:

Academy of Finland (www.aka.fi)  
Ministry of the Interior

### CO-ORDINATION:

Carelian Institute, University of Joensuu  
Programme Manager: Vesa Puuronen, Ph.D

### PROJECTS FUNDED:

Blomberg-Kroll Helena	Integration through work in a multicultural society	University of Helsinki Swedish School of Social Science e-mail: helena.blomberg@helsinki.fi
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Heikkinen Kaija	Ethno-cultural Otherness – Resource and limitation	University of Joensuu Karelian Institute e-mail: kaija.heikkinen@joensuu.fi
Hoikkala Tommi	Contested memberships: Immigrant youth in Finland	Finnish Youth Research Network Olympiastadion, e-mail: tommi.hoikkala@alli.fi
Häkkinen Antti	Ethnicity, interaction and marginalisation in twentieth century Finland	University of Helsinki Department of Social Science History e-mail: antti.hakkinen@helsinki.fi
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Juhila Kirsi	At the edge of the helping systems	University of Tampere Department of Social policy e-mail: kirsi.juhila@uta.fi
Koistinen Pertti	The competition, selection and social exclusion in the information society	University of Tampere Department of Social Policy e-mail: sppeko@uta.fi
Laine Kaarina	Origins of exclusion in early childhood	University of Turku Department of Education e-mail: kaarina.laine@utu.fi
Liebkind-Ormala Karmela	Developing theory and methodology in the study of the effects of discrimination and marginalization	University of Helsinki Department of Social Psychology e-mail: karmela.liebkind@helsinki.fi



Matinheikki-Kokko Kaija	Breaking the waves of mainstream through education: -individual integration plans of immigrants	University of Jyväskylä The Department of Education The Clinic for Multicultural Counselling e-mail: matinhei@edu.jyu.fi
Nousiainen Kevät	Including difference in legal subjecthood	University of Helsinki Faculty of Law e-mail: kevat.nousiainen@helsinki.fi
Riikonen Eero	Arts of the margins – How rehabilitation clients deal with oppressive discourses and practices?	Rehabilitation Foundation (Kuntoutussäätiö) Department of Development and Research e-mail: eero.riikonen@kuntoutussaatio.fi
Räsänen Rauni	Critical intercultural pedagogy as an intervention against marginalisation and inequality	University of Oulu Department of Education e-mail: rrasanen@ktk.oulu.fi
Sakaranaho Tuula	Muslims and religious equality in Finland	University of Helsinki Department of Comparative Religion e-mail: tuula.sakaranaho@helsinki.fi
Sava Inkeri	Expressive artistic activities and selfunderstanding of children from immigrant and adverse social background	University of Arts and Design Department of Art Education e-mail: inkeri.sava@uia.fi
Scheinin Martin	Law and ethnic relations: Rethinking legal strategies in changing political, ideological and social environment	Åbo Akademi University Department of Law/Institute for Human Rights e-mail: maschein@abo.fi
Schulman Harry	Finnish slum? On the spatial accumulation of deprivation and ethnic minorities	The City of Helsinki Urban Facts Department of Urban facts e-mail: harry.schulman@tike.hel.fi
Suikkanen Asko	The social potential of the periphery and regional inequality. A study of locality, nature policy and ethnic relations in the North	University of Lapland Department of Sociology e-mail: asko.suikkanen@urova.fi
Tuomala Matti	Economic manifestations of inequality, poverty and social exclusion	University of Tampere Department of Economics e-mail: ktmatio@uta.fi
Vuorela Ulla Wahlbeck Östen	Beyond marginalization and exclusion. An interdisciplinary consortium.  Project 1: Enclaving migrant experiences in Helsinki  Project 1: Identity, culture and transnationalism  Project 3: Employment, networks and transnationalism	University of Tampere Department of Sociology and Social Psychology e-mail: ulla.vuorela@uta.fi  Åbo Akademi University Department of Sociology e-mail osten.wahlbeck@abo.fi

## Appendix 2

### Researchers with SYREENI funding 2002

Duration of appointment	Part-time 12 months	Part-time 6-10 months	Part-time 1-5 months	Full-time 12 months	Full-time 6-10 months	Full-time 1-5 months
Number of researchers*	3	3	5	17	19	16
Percent of researchers	4.8	4.8	7.9	27.0	30.1	25.4

\*N=63. The researcher who was on maternity leave was excluded from the table. In addition, the two researchers who worked both part- and full-time have been marked as part-time workers only.

### Researchers with SYREENI funding 2003

Duration of appointment	Part-time 12 months	Part-time 6-10 months	Part-time 1-5 months	Full-time 12 months	Full-time 6-10 months	Full-time 1-5 months
Number of researchers	4	7	14	16	16	20
Percent of researchers with funding	5.2	9.0	18.2	20.8	20.8	26.0

N=77, The researcher who worked both part-time and without salary has been marked as part-time worker only, and the researcher who worked both part-time and full-time is regarded as full-time worker only. In addition researchers who worked 11.5, 5.5, 2.5. and 1.5. months have been marked as 12, 6, 3 and 2 months.

Source: Extended Abstracts of SYREENI research projects for 2002 and 2003, SYREENI Programme Co-ordination, University of Joensuu

*In autumn 1997 the Research Council for Culture and Society of the Academy of Finland launched a background study to overview the current status of research on racism and xenophobia in Finland. The three-year Research Programme on Marginalisation, Inequality and Ethnic Relations in Finland was carried out during 2001-2003. The aim of the programme was to strengthen research in these fields, to establish a scientific tradition in it and to bring together existing research capacities in a more concerted effort.*

*This report by an international evaluation panel presents the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the programme. It also includes recommendations for future research programmes.*

ISBN 951-715-510-7 (print)  
ISBN 951-715-511-5 (pdf)  
ISSN 0358-9153

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