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#### Go Finland Go!!!! Suomi makes it to U.S. evening news... Again!!!

Last night, 29 September 2010, Finland made it to the evening news in the United States, on "Nightly News with Brian Williams"

Awesome!

To watch the broadcast go to:

<http://podcast.msnbc.com/audio/podcast/MSNBC-NN-NETCAST-M4V.xml>

This podcast will only be available today because the page is updated daily with the current days news.

The segment on Finland starts at 19:10 if you want to jump ahead.  
1 month ago

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17 comments



Mikael Stop Following

**Mikael Klug** • Thank you John! Again good to hear. Trop out % zero! :-)

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • You bet Mikael!

I was surprised to learn that the U.S. selects the bottom 47% of people to become teachers but did know that the top 10% in Finland are allowed to teach.

1. years ago I went to "sotilaskoulu". I graduated when I was 18. When I wrote my oration I spoke about Finland. Now things are coming full circle! 25 years later.

My oration can be found here:

[http://www.tengstrom.us/index\\_files/senior\\_oration.pdf](http://www.tengstrom.us/index_files/senior_oration.pdf)

1 month ago



Mikael Stop Following

**Mikael Klug** • Paavo! You nailed it. <http://bit.ly/cWaw5v>

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • Last nights broadcast (29.09.10) about Finland's educational system is now on YouTube.

This segments runs for 3 minutes and can be accessed via:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqtAJ9ofPT4>

1 month ago



#### Updates: Last 7 Days



**Ken Jacobsen** commented on: Should Nokia adopt Android? I think they should.

22 hours ago Like 1 comment



**Juha Lassila** 劳尤豪 commented on: How well you know business benefits of Hong Kong as a place to start conquering the Asia?

23 hours ago Like 6 comments



**John Paavo Tengström** commented on: Whose lunch does Android eat?

1 day ago Like 1 comment

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#### Manager's Choice



**Announcement from Finnish Hi-tech Start-up Community - 2000 Members!**

Mikko Kaarela

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#### Latest Post



Should Nokia adopt Android? I think they should.

Ken Jacobsen

See all »

#### Connectors This Week



Follow Olli

**Olli Laaksonläita** • John, I especially like your reflection ... and ... Finland rocks! However, strong basic education does not solve each and every problem. It has been argued that the high unemployment figures among young adults in Finland are high because the apprenticeship system isn't as developed.  
1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • Olli & Mikael, Thank you very much for your words of encouragement! Much appreciated!

Olli, can you expound, please, upon what you mean by "However, strong basic education does not solve each and every problem." ?

Is a strong basic education in Finland, by design, suppose to solve problems? If so, what are these problems exactly?

Speaking for myself, I have always viewed a well rounded "basic education" as a foundation from which one decides the course of one's life. This could include continuing on to higher education, going to trade school or even entering the work force, as examples.

You also said,

"It has been argued that the high unemployment figures among young adults in Finland are high because the apprenticeship system isn't as developed."

In Finland, Statistics Finland categorizes young people as those persons between the ages of 15-24. Last year they stated the following:

Young people adapt on the labour market

[http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2009/tyti\\_2009\\_2010-02-16\\_kat\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2009/tyti_2009_2010-02-16_kat_001_en.html)

The employment rate fell in all age groups in 2009 but by most in the youngest age group of 15 to 24-year-olds. Young people's employment rate fell by 4.8 percentage points and the number of employed young persons decreased by 32,000. Employment has, indeed, decreased most among young people.

Shortage of work affected young men more than young women. Over the 2008–2009 period, employment rate fell by 5.9 percentage points among young men and by 3.6 percentage points among young women. Indeed, young women's employment rate remained higher than young men's, or at 41.4 per cent, while the respective figure for young men was 35.6 per cent.

This year has only a quarter to go and the figures for it will soon follow. However, as of August 2010, Statistics Finland states the following:

"This August, the unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 was 14.5 per cent, which was 3.2 percentage points lower than in August 2009."

[http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2010/08/tyti\\_2010\\_08\\_2010-09-21\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2010/08/tyti_2010_08_2010-09-21_tie_001_en.html)

In any case, if we look at last year (2009), the position of Statistics Finland stated that work shortages kept young men from holding a job?

If this indeed is the case and these young men are well educated and skilled, because they were working the year before (2008), how can you arrive at the conclusion that the apprenticeship system is not developed????

1 month ago



Follow Olli

**Olli Laaksonläita** • John, the point I was trying to make was, that in some countries like Switzerland, apprenticeship ("oppisopimus") is much more developed than in Finland. Thus, practically oriented young people are integrated earlier into the working life and unemployment among them is lower.  
1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • Who says Finland is lacking in this area? According to government statistics the rate of unemployment amongst young people is due to the lack of work orders and not their high level of education.

Do you by any chance have any links to offer ?

1 month ago



Ignacio Garcia Leirado

John Paavo Tengström

Mikko Kaarela

Victor V Vurpillat

Marko Lauhiala

Follow Olli

**Olli Laaksonlahti** • John, see e.g. [http://www.sociologia.unimib.it/v2/DATA/Insegnamenti/4\\_3100/materiale/breen%20entry.pdf](http://www.sociologia.unimib.it/v2/DATA/Insegnamenti/4_3100/materiale/breen%20entry.pdf)

... where employment protection and matching are compared. my point was more on matching ...

1 month ago



Mikael  
Stop Following

**Mikael Klug** • Go Suomi Go! Faster please!!!

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Finnish+enterprises+are+sluggish+on+recruitment+of+immigrants/1135260476030>

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • Olli,

Thank you very much for your reply. However, I was anticipating to read some sort of support for your claim that:

"the point I was trying to make was, that in some countries like Switzerland, apprenticeship ("oppisopimus") is much more developed than in Finland."

You haven't provided any level of information to substantiate this claim. Although the paper you provided by Richard Breen proved to be an interesting read, although it was written 5 years ago, I'm surprised you referred to it at all. Especially, as it refers to a period in time that occurred 10-15 years ago! Also, OECD methods have been known to leave individual countries upset as to the accuracy and methodology in which data is calculated and internationally presented.

What really has me even more intrigued is whether or not you were aware how outdated this study is and if you had read it??? Something else has me startled too. As all here know, the 1990-1993 recession hit Finland extremely hard. More so, when we consider the export market lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. At the time unemployment hit 20%! The Finnish government accumulated external debt which in 1994 peaked at 60%. Although GDP returned to pre-recession levels in 1996 a slight recession occurred again in 1998. I'm sure I don't need to paint the picture further. Everyone gets the point. This period in time was extremely volatile in Finnish history and the Finnish leadership ought to be commended for the "role up the sleeves - grab the bull by the horns" position it maintained when addressing the economic crises of the 90's. Needless to say many countries in Europe had their own issues as well. Therefore, using economic data referencing this period in time only serves to highlight how Finland championed its own success out of an extremely bad situation! This fact is etched in stone. As I'm sure you know the IMF sung on many occasions praise for Finland's quick turn around. However, even with this said economies in Europe did take actions that may not have necessarily been taken at the time to address the crisis we were in. With this point in mind, the period under consideration in Breen's analysis is not an appropriate barometer for this discussion. More so, for the point you haven't yet proven and the talk You and I are having in 2010.

As Breen points out in his synopsis on page 125:

"Two institutional factors play a central part: the educational system's role in signaling the suitability of a job seeker for a particular job, and the degree to which employers are prevented from dismissing workers."

These two premises become the sole foundation of his entire analysis.

Now let's look at the facts relevant for this period. Below I have gathered some tidbits and will assume the reader has already read Breen's paper, so that the understanding exists as to how this information falls into place.

The European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line stated on 28 September, 1997: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/1997/09/feature/fi9709129f.htm>

"SAK fears that there is a risk that the whole of restaurant business is turning into a "fast-food" industry where those who are seeking better jobs work only for a short time. In this industry, jobs which offered good career opportunities at one time no longer exist, and contracts of employment are becoming increasingly short term and are less secure."

"According to an inquiry conducted by the Finnish Entrepreneurs in April 1997, only 7% of the companies thought that the problems of obtaining qualified labour was the most significant obstacle to company development."

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • "Training is seen as the most important means to overcome the skills shortage. The employment service has concentrated on providing vocational and apprentice-based training leading to vocational diploma qualifications, both at the workplace and in association with educational institutions. Such apprenticeship training has been welcomed both by employers and unions and initial indications are encouraging. The success of this kind of training is in contrast to broader-based employment training courses which are conducted for a large number of people. The success rate of the trainees for the two types of course reflects their popularity. Those who have taken the more focused vocational courses which are geared to imparting company-specific skills are much more likely to obtain jobs."

"New training arrangements and customized on-the-job training (eg apprenticeship training) is targeted to provide the necessary trained labour for those employers which are faced with the worst skill shortages. Initial indications suggest that they are successful. It is clear that future success will depend on tripartite cooperation between the government, employers and trade unions. (Juha Hietanen, Ministry of Labour)"

The following statement was issued by the European Trade Union Institute in 2002, page 52. It is obvious that if Finland did not ALREADY MAINTAIN a strong system in which workers skills/education are linked with industry needs then the following claim could never ever been made:

"8. Are there difficulties in finding a "comparable" worker? In Austria, Denmark, Finland and Germany, no problems have been reported so far."

<http://www.etui.org/research/content/download/1810/11205/version/1/file/R+73+sec.pdf>

The following suggests that under performing workers can be dismissed and replaced by competent and skilled part-time workers if conducted in a timely manner. It also encourages a company to promote from within. In turn, this allows time for the incompetent and dismissed employee to search for a position more in line with his/her skill set and capabilities.

"In Finland, the conversion from part-time to full-time is possible if the employer needs to step up the workforce. The employer then has the obligation to offer this work first to a part-time worker, even if he/she is obliged by other provisions of the Employment contract act in relation to re-employment to offer the extra job to a recently dismissed worker. The employer is also required to organize necessary training as far as this is considered reasonable."

Page 56

<http://www.etui.org/research/content/download/1810/11205/version/1/file/R+73+sec.pdf>

"Approximately half of all Finnish students move to a vocational school after graduating from basic education. The aim of vocational schooling is to prepare its students for entering the workforce, and therefore the practical skills needed for each trade are taught in greater detail than general academia."

<http://www.justlanded.com/english/Finland/Finland-Guide/Education/Secondary-education>

Vocational education and training in Finland

[http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5171\\_en.pdf](http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5171_en.pdf)

Page 23

\* School-based education and training

Since 1 August 2001, all programmes leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications take three years to complete and comprise 120 credits. One year of study consists of 40 credits, with one credit equivalent to 40 hours of a student's average workload. Vocational qualifications provide general eligibility for both polytechnics and universities. All upper secondary qualifications build on the basic education syllabus.

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • Qualifications can be completed in the form of school-based education and training at vocational institutions (ammattilliset oppilaitokset, yrkesläroanstalterna), apprenticeship training (oppisopimuskoulutus, läroavtalsutbildning) (see 4.3.2.) or competence-based qualifications (ammattitutkinnot, yrkesexamina). Initial training is organised mainly as school-based training and most students are young people with no prior vocational training. All initial vocational qualifications available at educational institutions may be obtained through apprenticeship training.

In Breen's analysis of Labour Market Regulation and Educational Signaling he states on page 126 the following:

"Empirically, one combination, low regulation and high signalling – labelled B in Figure 1 – does not exist (although countries like Denmark and Switzerland approximate it to some degree)."

Breen, in my opinion, uses examples of countries that he believes will not be critically disputed regarding their classification in Figure 1 on page 127. Although Finland is not mentioned by name, I can very easily categorize and argue why Finland would also fit in "B", by the data I have submitted and researched for this period. That said, because Finland fits ideally well into category "B" based on the factual empirical evidence, Finland obviously must be better off than Switzerland!

Let's jump to the chase. On page 132 Breen states in his conclusion the following and I strongly suggest those interested read it. He says:

"The conclusion to be drawn from these considerations is that the model I have presented is partial and the relative contribution of the factors on which I have concentrated can only be established through the use of a more encompassing specification."

With that said, hardly can an analysis as interesting as this be used in order to support a claim that Switzerland maintains a more developed apprenticeship system over Finland. That simply is non-sense!

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • CONCLUSION

The Finnish Government through the charters of the Ministry of Labour & Education has maintained a focused approach on developing vocational and trade based training in Finland. Government data clearly suggests that such programs have been extremely successful while delivering a positive impact on industry as a whole. Indeed, high levels of unemployed youth between the ages of 15-24 are finding entry into the workforce difficult due to the decline in work orders. Government data clearly reflects this as being the case. Thus, the conversation needs to change and question how companies can internationally market themselves on a more competitive level in order to increase work orders and reduce unemployment.

Breen's paper on "Explaining Cross-national Variation in Youth Unemployment" cannot be justifiably used as a proclamation that Switzerland maintains a more developed apprenticeship system over Finland. As the author himself states, his analysis is still a work in progress and only serves to demonstrate that such theories do exist. Such outdated analysis is not in step with modern times. Regardless, sometimes it is also good to reflect on the past, and in this case Finland has much to be proud of in regard to how far it has come and the hurdles it has conquered.

Finally, statistical data produced by the OECD is extremely bias against Finland. See:

[http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/youth-unemployment-rate\\_20752342-table2](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/youth-unemployment-rate_20752342-table2)

Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus) released the following official statement:

"Because a large share of 15 to 24-year-olds young people were schoolchildren and students not belonging to the labour force, the unemployment rate of persons of that age is considerably higher than the percentage of unemployed people in the whole age group of 15 to 24-year-olds. For example, the unemployment rate among 15 to 24-year-olds was, on average, 21.5 per cent in 2009, while the proportion of the unemployed in the whole age group was ten per cent, on average."

[http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2010/05/tyti\\_2010\\_05\\_2010-06-22\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2010/05/tyti_2010_05_2010-06-22_tie_001_en.html)

Statistics Swiss released their numbers for the second quarter of last year which showed that the unemployment rate for youth stood at 8.2% or 51,000 youth between the ages of 15-24. Statistics Finland say's 28,000 during the same period were unemployed!

<http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/en/index/themen/03/03/blank/key/erwerbslose0/struktur.html>[http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2010/05/tyti\\_2010\\_05\\_2010-06-22\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/2010/05/tyti_2010_05_2010-06-22_tie_001_en.html)

On 7 August 2009, the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs released the following statement:

"The number of unemployed people in Switzerland at the end of July 2009 increased to 145,364. The new figures reveal that Swiss unemployment jumped 57.7 percent between July 2008 and July this year. Compared to end June 2009, 5,111 more people are unemployed, of whom 63% are young people between the ages of 15 and 24."

<http://genevalunch.com/blog/tag/swiss-unemployment/>

In closing, I would agree with Breen that shifting focus from cross-sectional data to micro-level and longitudinal data and determining the models implications in regard to individual behavior through more powerful testing would be the ideal why to explain country specific cases.

1 month ago



Follow Olli

**Olli Laaksonlahti** • John, thank you for your elaboration.

The old saying seems to be valid: "do not trust any statistics if you haven't manipulated them yourself". Every country has a bit different figures while systems differ too.

Newest figures:

Switzerland, end of August 2010 (seco):  
142'879 unemployed; of that 24'776 ages 15 to 24

Finland, in August 2010 (Statistics Finland):  
197,000 unemployed; of that 46'000 ages 15 to 24.

However, I still would like to repeat my point: well developed apprenticeship systems (oppisopimus) in countries like Switzerland or Germany are worth looking at, when explaining youth unemployment compared to unemployment in the whole population. But also, as you state (as the study does too), that is by no means, the only explanation.

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • Olli,

Good Evening! However, You originally interjected yourself into the conversation by stating:

"However, strong basic education does not solve each and every problem. It has been argued that the high unemployment figures among young adults in Finland are high because the apprenticeship system isn't as developed."

In turn, I responded by simply asking:

"Olli, can you expound, please, upon what you mean by "However, strong basic education does not solve each and every problem." ?

Is a strong basic education in Finland, by design, suppose to solve problems? If so, what are these problems exactly?"

You replied by stating:

"John, the point I was trying to make was, that in some countries like Switzerland, apprenticeship ("oppisopimus") is much more developed than in Finland. Thus, practically oriented young people are integrated earlier into the working life and unemployment among them is lower."

Yet this comment is only a repeat of what you originally stated! Nothing new was learned!!!!!!

I then asked:

"Who says Finland is lacking in this area? According to government statistics the rate of unemployment amongst young people is due to the lack of work orders and not their high level of education.

Do you by any chance have any links to offer?"

Your reply included only a link to:

[http://www.sociologia.unimib.it/v2/DATA/Insegnamenti/4\\_3100/materiale/breen%20entry.pdf](http://www.sociologia.unimib.it/v2/DATA/Insegnamenti/4_3100/materiale/breen%20entry.pdf)

I then provided a detailed rebuttal for your response.

In rebuttal you stated:

"The old saying seems to be valid: "do not trust any statistics if you haven't manipulated them yourself".

I never manipulated anything! And I will say to you that as a former employee for the Government of Finland, we never ever engaged in such practices! I also provided links to where foreign government data existed so my comments could be authenticated!

You continued by stating the following:

"However, I still would like to repeat my point: well developed apprenticeship systems (oppisopimus) in countries like Switzerland or Germany are worth looking at, when explaining youth unemployment compared to unemployment in the whole population".

Sir, I asked you numerous times to substantiate this claim. Each time you have refused to do so and only issued a blind written statement void of factual evidence!

1 month ago



**John Paavo Tengström** • Talk about proof reading.....

<http://www.iltasanomat.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/uutinen.asp?id=2019986>

19 days ago



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