

# Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement in Multilevel Immigration Governance: A Finnish Perspective within the EU Context

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## Abstract

In 2015, Europe faced a major migration wave as people fled wars, poverty, and persecution, primarily from Syria, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. This posed significant governance challenges, particularly for Finland, which received around 30,000 asylum applications—ten times its usual intake. While much attention has been given to the broader migration crisis, this study focuses on Finland's response within the EU, using a constructivist approach. Migration governance involves collaboration between multiple actors and institutions across different levels. This research explores how Finland manages immigration at both local and national levels and interacts with EU institutions. It analyses these processes using social constructivism and the multilevel governance (MLG) framework. Interviews with key migration governance actors reveal that Finland's culture of trust and cooperation and its small size contribute to effective migration governance. Finland's well-prepared positions, shaped by government programs and parliamentary debates, allow it to engage effectively in EU negotiations. This unified approach reflects the constructivist view of multilevel governance, ensuring Finland plays an active role in EU deliberations.

## Keywords

Multilevel Governance, Immigration, Interaction, Complexity, Social Constructivism, Finland

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## 1. Introduction

According to the [European Commission \(2015\)](#), humans have migrated throughout the history of humanity. Europe has experienced migration for decades; however, immigration has become a topical issue in Europe ([King & Lulle, 2016](#): p. 10). This is attributed to the fact that the EU's Member States are facing sequential

long-term demographic and economic challenges due to high age dependency ratios. Although Europe needs migrants, immigration is highly regulated, especially illegal movements across Europe's borders by third-country nationals (TCNs). Different actors from diverse levels (Supranational, national, and local) govern such activities and interact among themselves in various attempts to manage the phenomenon (Dimitriadis et al., 2021). Mainwaring (2012) argued 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. This research analysed the level of commitment to cross-administration among the institutions and how they ensure these occur within this dynamic and complex interrelationship.

There are different perspectives on studying immigration, depending on the discipline. This study adopts the social-political perspective to analyse immigration governance. According to Pierre and Peters (2002), the interaction among different groups in society, 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. Interaction is, therefore, a more effective and efficient way of governing than the solo approach taken usually by traditional governments (Bavinck et al., 2013, *ibid*). This contention is why this study analysed the interaction among the various institutions at the different levels of the MLG relationship. The social constructivism theory clarified the perceptions of commitment and how they generate a common perspective toward achieving a common goal. Various institutions and actors thus create a perception of immigration, guiding how they formulate policies and implement decisions.

Stakeholder engagement is fundamentally about communication. Instead of ignoring stakeholders or simply sending messages through the media, institutions aim first to identify who their stakeholders are, engage in dialogue to understand critical issues, and then respond accordingly (Bruce & Shelley, 2010). There is growing evidence that stakeholder engagement is vital across multiple levels of governance, particularly in decision-making and implementation where adapting best practices to specific populations is essential. While there has been a proliferation of work on stakeholder engagement, empirical evidence on the most effective practices remains limited. Even less attention has been given to evaluating engagement processes and demonstrating how both the quality and quantity of engagement influence research outcomes across governance levels especially in managing immigration (Goodman & Sanders Thompson, 2017).

Finland enthusiastically engages in the activities of the EU as a Member State. In this study, I analysed how Finland's immigration policies conform with or contradict the EU's. This research investigated the dynamics and complexities involved in Finland and the EU's management of immigration to attain this common aim. Specifically, it examined how they interacted in finding solutions to the

influx of immigrants in 2015-2016. Therefore, the analysis probed how immigration governance occurs at the EU level and how these dynamics and complexities travel in both directions. I considered that the EU depends on the Member States to implement its migration policies while the Member States expect the EU to provide leadership in managing regular immigration activities and likewise in times of crisis. That is, the EU Member States have integrated aspects of the EU's laws within their national legal systems. However, interests conflict, and the EU's regulations and rulings supersede those of the Member States' domestic laws (Nugent, 2017).

Smaller states such as Malta, Cyprus, Estonia, and Finland are well underrepresented in the migration literature, which often features the dynamics between the more prominent countries and the EU. For instance, Mainwaring (2012) argues that European studies have mainly emphasised more significant state dynamics despite the presence of several smaller States within the EU, which have implications for the functioning of the Union. This contention supports why choosing Finland is relevant in this study, as it helps us understand the events that unfolded during the crisis and how a smaller state influences policies.

The research addressed the following objectives.

- Analysed the role of stakeholders in shaping immigration governance at multiple levels within Finland to assess the impact of the EU's multilevel governance framework on stakeholder engagement in Finnish immigration policies.
- Identified challenges and opportunities for enhancing stakeholder participation in Finland's immigration governance structures to explore best practices for stakeholder collaboration in immigration governance from both Finnish and EU perspectives.
- Evaluated the effectiveness of current stakeholder engagement mechanisms in Finland's immigration policy within the broader EU context to provide policy recommendations for improving stakeholder involvement in multilevel immigration governance in Finland and across the EU.

In this research, top and middle-level managers of immigration governance institutions in Finland were interviewed. 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 & 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, hence its use in this research. This research also used documents gathered from the databases of various institutions, which was supported by the elite interviews described above for triangulation purposes. 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 for analysis purpose.

The first section depicts how the institutions studied ensure administrative commitments. A discussion of how interactions facilitate attaining their goals follows. Consequently, to show how policymaking, decision-making, and implementation are achieved through interactions, I used the case of the 2015-2016 immigration crisis and concentrated on decision-making during those emergency moments. The article ends with an overarching summary of my contribution to knowledge in the field of immigration and governance.

## **2. Ensuring and Enhancing Cross-Administrative Commitments**

Governance involves institutional collaborations related to understanding policy-making, decision-making, and implementation (Torfing et al., 2012) in the EU and Finland. As emphasised in this research, various actors involved in immigration governance within Finland and the EU aim to work together effectively and efficiently. Effective and efficient governance requires not only the development of appropriate policies but also their successful implementation through collaborative efforts across multiple levels and sectors of society and leadership. Hence, the different actors cooperate toward this goal by engaging in cross-administrations and negotiations within the MLG framework. Arnold et al. (2015: p. i) argue that “many policy issues cross the boundaries between ministries and their sector responsibilities”. They contended further that “cross-ministry cooperation” in immigration governance “is fairly easy where few ministries (actors) are involved” and vice-versa. However, many institutions are involved in immigration governance within Finland and between Finland and the EU. They are divided into ministries, departments, units, and sub-units at the local and national levels, making the interlinkages complex. There is another level of complexity and dynamism when Finland interacts with the EU because of the higher level of politics, negotiations, opinions, perspectives, and interests that all the Member States present.

This assertion implies that reaching their goals at the EU level is very complex because each Member State tends to negotiate various stances. At the national level, however, the Ministry of Interior, a division and an executive arm of the government, interacts with Parliament to make policies and laws that the ministry drafts. Since several other actors are directly and indirectly involved in immigration governance within these complex networks, there is a need for cross-administration and remaining committed to such a relationship. For instance, in numerous situations, the Finnish Border Guards and Finnish Police can cross administrative boundaries based on existing laws and their commitment to the cross-administration relationship. Such relationships usually require all involved parties

to perform their obligations to function well. This argument corresponds to the EASO's Asylum Report (EASO, 2020: p. 17) that complex challenges require more comprehensive, multifaceted integrated responses that go beyond ad hoc interventions and connect political, development and humanitarian action. For instance, EMN 2017 pointed out that in November 2015, Finland streamlined its asylum process by having one authority handle both the initial hearing and asylum interview, improving efficiency and reducing backlogs.

Hence, this example of collaboration enhanced their efficiency in dealing with the asylum situation in 2015. It implies that such relationships facilitate cross-administration among the governing actors, and the collaborating parties ensure commitments when mutual understandings abound in both regular and crisis situations. This example is also a way of empowering subunits within the government to make global decisions that have multilevel and cross-departmental implications. However, for this approach to be practical, real-time information sharing and transparency must be achieved across the different departments and government organisations. For instance, the departments could create a shared electronic database with a robust access control management system on immigration information. This recommendation, which is already a familiar Finnish immigration management system of information sharing, is discussed below.

### 3. Cross-Administrative Commitments

Finnish law (s) obliges some institutions to perform cross-administrative functions while others only do so based on agreements and necessity. For instance, the Finnish Border Guards and Finnish Police remain committed to cross-administrative tasks because of existing Finnish law. For example, in some Finnish airports like the Jyväskylä airport, where the Finnish Border Guards are not present, the Police act in their capacity. Also, in some small towns where the Police are out of reach, the Finnish Border Guards perform their responsibilities. In short, in places where the Finnish Police are not present, the Finnish Border Guards perform their duties and vice-versa (Interview with IH, 2020).

In contrast, the Finnish Customs mainly cooperate with the Finnish Police in pre-trial investigations on immigration issues since most of their activities are not related, like in the case of the Finnish Border Guards. Hence, they agree to engage in specific activities occasionally as part of their mutual understanding. For example, during the 2015-2016 immigration crisis, the Finnish Customs and Defence Forces also took part in the registration operations at the reception centre in Tornio (EMN, 2017). A practical case of cross-administrative commitment in the Finnish context is that the Finnish Border Guards are the only institutions operating helicopters in Finland. Hence, when the Finnish Police need helicopter transportation to a crime scene, the Finnish Border Guards offer such means of assistance. Also, they ensure cross-administration commitments by purchasing specific logistics like guns and many other items together (Interview with IH, 2020). This illustration depicts instances where the government intentionally de-

signed structural interdependence between its different units; thus, the resource control and restricted distribution of helicopters drive the Police and the FBGs to work together at crime scenes requiring helicopter transportation.

In addressing the need for cross-administrative commitments, a respondent indicated that one unit cannot coordinate all migration issues (Interview with TK 2020). Consistent with this claim is [Arnold et al.'s \(2015: p. 11\)](#) argument that “division into sectoral ministries is an established organisational feature of government, yet a growing number of policy issues cross the boundaries between them”. Hence, immigration governance in Finland involves the traversing of authorities’ administrative boundaries. Thus, it makes sense that the leaders encourage all relevant actors or partners to solve societal problems and commit to them (Interview with IH, 2020) since immigration governance is a constant daily task, and they must maintain such relationships. For example, integration programmes in Finland sustain cross-administrative functions and commitments between relevant authorities involved because of their constant operations and interactions (Interview with FL, 2020). Therefore, Finnish authorities typically 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 enable collaboration and implementation.

Also, giving assurances to other actors and explaining the need to remain committed has worked for the Finnish immigration governance authorities. An interviewee explained that:

Of course, we try to assure our partners that this is an important thing, that we must do this together, and that they need to participate, which usually works. That is, somebody could contact another person and say, “Listen! I know that this is not your core activity, but we really would appreciate it if you could support us and do it together”. So it is like scratch my back, and I scratch your back. So, in Finland, we don’t have problems with this (Interview with HN, 2020).

This assertion shows the level of trust the collaborating institutions have or must have among themselves to advance commitments. Without trust and confidence, asking other institutions to collaborate on a project, especially where it is to be permanent, can prove challenging. Thus, confidence built through previous operations and delivery of services can allow one authority to delegate certain aspects of its core tasks in a cross-administration relationship and remain committed to it. For example, the Finnish Immigration Service enables the Finnish Red Cross to operate the reception centres for asylum seekers because they have successfully done so often. [EMN \(2017\)](#) also noted that the Finnish Immigration Service established most of the reception centres together with the Finnish Red Cross during the 2015 immigration crisis.

Daily or frequent updates among the institutions to know what is happening

on each other's side also ensure cross-administrative commitment (Interview with RK, 2020). For instance, the Finnish Immigration Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have daily open communication where they update each other on the ongoing activities in their institutions and what could be a common way forward. Such communications ensure that they can quickly come together to solve any emergent issues or plan to prevent any forthcoming ones.

#### 4. Cross-Administrative Challenges

Crossing administrative boundaries between the different actors governing immigration can have setbacks. These setbacks include interagency cooperation challenges, role-specific tensions, politicisation, resource allocation issues and nested governance. Although some respondents think there are no challenges because they believe cooperation is more effortless and smoother in Finland, some opined that challenges abound. For instance, relationships can become sticky due to misunderstandings, the actors' diverse expertise, and how they present their views on the issue at hand (Interviews with IH, TK, RK, JT & HN, 2020). Also, their specific roles and principles can make it difficult for cross-administrations. Such relationships may lead to arguments and difficulties in arriving at decisions, which can defeat the relevance of the collaborative efforts in the MLG relationship. This finding implies that if the Finnish Immigration Service, for instance, issues unfavourable decisions to asylum seekers and the Police serve the applicants with these decisions, the Finnish Red Cross, which is in charge of the Reception Centres, can explain the other options available to the applicants (Interview with LK, 2020). This role sometimes leads to some level of friction between these authorities. One authority perhaps wants the applicant to leave after getting an unfavourable decision; hence, they are tight-lipped over the other options available to the applicants. Meanwhile, the other is educating them on the different avenues to remain in the country, creating tensions and distrust among the authorities. A respondent recounted that:

When asylum seekers receive unfavourable decisions on their applications, our role is to remain as objective as possible while informing them about other options. We have discussed this issue many times with the Finnish Immigration Service and the Police because they want asylum seekers out of the country. Therefore, the Finnish Immigration Service and Police are usually not happy when we alert them that we do this. But, for humanity's sake, we need to tell the asylum seekers what this means for them if they stay. Thus, if you are illegally staying in Finland, what will happen to you? Of course, we have found a way of doing it, but there is always that question emerging about what we have talked about to asylum seekers. Thus, we discussed with the Police and the Finnish Immigration Service whether they should know about the options available (Interview with LK, 2020).

The statement above clarifies instances of cross-administrative challenges in immigration governance in a distinct way. There are also occasions when decisions

are made based on inaccurate information because some of the actors involved withheld relevant information from others. Such hesitancy may arise because of the politicisation of the issue (Interview with JL, 2020). For instance, a respondent politician noted that:

When Finland abstained from voting in the EU decision-making in 2015, 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 is an impossible pill to swallow (Interview with AA, 2021).

This assertion implies that highly politicised and sensitive issues can be challenging to handle in cross-administration, especially when finding common ground on issues. Other actors do express discontentment when situations do not favour them. Some institutions may also wish to remain apolitical in cross-administrative cooperation and withdraw their contributions in politicised dealings (Interview with LK, 2020), thereby reducing cross-administration commitment. For instance, a respondent described a scenario that:

For example, during the 2015-2016 immigration crisis, there were demonstrations by some supporters of the True Finns and the refugees in the big Market Square for several weeks. This tension was already so close to politics that we said it was not our role to be there! It must be for the community! The City of Helsinki needs to care for the situation, not us (Interview with LK, 2020).

So, this implies that some institutions within the MLG network may withdraw their role if they feel issues have become politicised, as is the case of the one described above. However, others are also apolitical but cannot withdraw their commitment or participation when political issues emerge because of their mandate. They may instead decline comments that can escalate the case in such instances. For example, during the interviews, a respondent was reluctant to respond to a question deemed political. Thus, the respondent asserted that;

Well, Is it Politics or? Yes, I understand the question, but you also have to realise that it might be difficult for me to answer it because I am representing the [taken the institution out] in this study (Interview with JL, 2020).

Therefore, it can be contended that politicising issues can make some authorities reluctant to commit to cross-administration fully. However, this research alone is not enough to defend such a claim, but the analysis points in that direction. Politicisation, therefore, can lead to isolated loyalty and ultimately prevent people from fully participating in the government's overall prosperity, limiting the cross-fertilisation of knowledge and resources.

Insufficient resource allocation from the government is also a challenge because the institutions regularly struggle to perform their tasks (Interviews with JT & TK, 2020). With a limited budget, they must prioritise certain services to the neglect of others, which impacts all aspects of their operations. Related to this is the diffi-

culty in allocating funding, mainly because immigration-related issues spread across various Ministries whose mandates are different (Interview with RK, 2020). For example, health and social care belong to the Ministry of Social Affairs, residence permits belong to the Finnish Immigration Service under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, and integration and employment-related issues belong to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. These institutions already have separate administrative branches to which they allocate resources; hence, there can be challenges in the cooperation and coordination of actions, policies, and funding. This argument also means that there would be a need to allocate the financing of joint projects. Again, some naturally affiliated institutions must negotiate separate cooperation deals with those with specific roles. This kind of nested governance is the essence of MLG that can enhance collaboration.

## 5. Attaining Goals through Collaboration

An important point to remember is that Finland is a consensus-driven society where engaging authorities, especially those involved in this research, in collaborative efforts is pretty much a norm. Rainio-Niemi (2015: p. 27) argued that “in the Nordic context, it is considered that sharing of common good facilitates compromise and mutual agreement in place of zero-sum games and a winner-take-all attitude”. This assertion reveals that managers in charge of these agencies and institutions can quickly contact each other for collaboration and get their approval (Interviews with RK, TK, IH, HN & JT, 2020). These transactions can 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. Such collaborations typically depend on the issue at hand and the formality required to get the cooperation underway. For instance:

During the 2015-2016 migration crisis, a crisis management group was established under the MoI to maintain situational awareness of migration and to agree on change-related measures and leadership arrangements in exceptional situations. It comprised the Ministry of Interior, Finnish Immigration Service, the National Police Board, the Finnish Border Guards, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (FSIS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMN, 2017: p. 10).

The assertion above indicates that the authorities involved in the crisis management group engaged and cooperated very closely to solve the issues which confronted them. Maybe without this level of cooperation, bureaucracy would have undermined their individual efforts. The group effort helped them work in a common direction in a facilitated manner toward a common goal. Of course, this does not also imply that it is always without challenges.

Again, because Finland is a small country in terms of population, physical proximity and familiarisation, cooperation works well for effective interaction. Effectively coordinating these activities by higher authorities in such interactions also con-

tributes to their success (Interview with TK). Thus, according to Faberi (2018), coordinating actions between levels of governance is an excellent way to increase the effectiveness of measures adopted. Therefore, this research asserts that Finnish institutions are practical and efficient in collaboration, which is consistent with Faberi's (ibid) argument. However, this does not imply that they have resolved all their immigration-related issues. Instead, they have achieved many of their goals, which ideally would have seemed impossible without practical collaboration. This claim is the essence of the MLG appraisal, which supports the idea that diverse institutions on different levels can achieve goals together. For instance:

In the autumn of 2015, a ministerial group on migration that comprised the Minister of the Interior, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Finance, among others, constantly reviewed the asylum situation in different ministries and made decisions on various measures (EMN, 2017: p. 10).

Also, the cluster of Finnish immigration governance authorities performing similar activities is appropriate in explaining collaboration and cooperation. One of the respondents was proud of the nature of collaboration and how it enables the authorities to access the decisions of others easily, said:

When it comes to cooperation with other authorities in Finland, we are proud! We have a standard immigration register. Yes! In Finland, we use it. We call it "Ulkomaliset Rekisteri" in Finnish. I have heard that there is no similar system in other European countries. About a year ago, I met colleagues from other European Union countries, and I spoke for about 10 minutes there. I said the Police, Immigration Service, and Courts can see the actual data of various decisions, and the people there told me you have an excellent system, and that's really good (Interview with JL, 2020).

This claim indicates that having access to information to make decisions and policies about immigration and implement them is comparatively more straightforward for the Finnish authorities. Such a system can, for instance, facilitate the deportation process and eliminate irrelevant bureaucratic bottlenecks that usually inhibit such activities. This example is also a way of indirectly and informally promoting and propagating local systems in one EU nation to other parts of the EU. Again, another respondent gave an excellent example of a cluster of authorities in a collaboration. The interviewee said:

In 2017, we set up a service point for international newcomers called "International House Help Helsinki." You can google it and find the website. That's a service point operated jointly by the cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa; so the capital cities, the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, the Finnish Tax Administration, the Social Institution of Finland (KELA), the Finnish Immigration Service, 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's a service point we set up in 2017, and the City of Helsinki coordinates the operations. So, International House Help Helsinki provides a wide range of information and public authority services to international newcomers in the Helsinki capital region under one roof. It also provides free advisory and counselling services to employers and companies, for instance, on issues relating to international work. So that's one of the concrete ways we cooperate with seven different public service providers and other stakeholders (Interview with FL, 2020).

This quote illustrates a typical collaborative effort involving different organisations at diverse levels of authority. This policy of bringing together all authorities under one roof and being accessible to service users at a click looks laudable. Its efficiency will depend on its constant functionality, devoid of bureaucracies. All the actors need to provide faster and more reliable service for such collaboration to function progressively. From the points elaborated thus far, cooperation, collaboration and effective operational coordination are relevant for the effective governance of immigration in Finland. For instance, during the immigration crisis in 2015, Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's government concentrated on facilitating the asylum-seeking process through closer cooperation among the different ministries and administrative authorities (Immigration Department, 2018). Such a system is said to be effective because all the operational actors engage in cooperative interactions, enabling the country to have an excellent capacity to govern immigration and remain committed to cross-administrations. Finland exhibited this practice while handling the immigration crisis in 2015-2016.

In sum, Finland effectively managed the crisis because of the cooperation and nature of its consensus-driven society, which facilitated decision-making and operations. Relying on each other demands that all actors jointly locate common grounds to respond to problems and create opportunities that serve their societies' interests (Torfing et al., 2012). A respondent stated that:

Cooperation in Finland is well-functioning between the authorities without any significant boundaries in their work. Even if we are independent authorities working in the same field, we can work together and cooperate reasonably. That is not clear in many countries because I know well inside Europe and beyond and have seen how it goes there. It might be because we are a small country. It is easier to understand our counterparts than in more prominent countries where no one knows each other that much (Interview with IH, 2020).

Geographically, Finland is not a tiny country. The notion of smallness here refers to the country's total population, which is about 5.5 million (Official Statistics of Finland, 2021) in relation to its land area. Also, the homogenous nature of the country's population makes it easier for interactions to occur. Finns trust themselves and find it simple to work with each other. However, this does not imply

that the attainment of their goals through collaboration is always straightforward. [Torfing et al. \(2012\)](#) argued that partnership enables governments to encourage positive components of different activities but has limitations. This argument suggests that 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. Thus, although the Finnish institutions do attain many of their goals through partnerships, remaining committed can sometimes become problematic. The research finds that these challenges exist, but agreements signed between the actors or institutions involved can reverse and engage them. For instance, the Finnish Immigration Service can sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Finnish Red Cross Society to manage quota refugees and operate Reception Centres (Interviews with LK & PH, 2020). This assertion implies that they have mutual agreements to remain committed. This example also suggests that a structural system, such as a memorandum of understanding, is a proactive approach to dealing with complex situations when dependence on practical wisdom fails to yield desired results. For instance, there are conflicting interests between political counterparts. However, it is relevant to state that the parties can terminate such contracts if circumstances demand so. Nevertheless, 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](#)).

Nevertheless, a respondent (FL, 2020) expressed a contrary view to all the others, which was quite fascinating. The response 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 and negotiating with other institutions. However, they believe that such situations have improved over the years. But, compared to the respondents' levels of operation within the MLG, this respondent operates at a lower level, which could be a contributing factor. This assertion is why it is interesting that they have taken a contrary view on cooperation among the authorities. It also stirs controversy because the competencies in immigration governance tend to concentrate mainly at the national level (Interview with TK, 2020). For instance, during Europe's 2015-2016 immigration crisis, "municipalities in Finland, Latvia and Malta had no voice regarding where reception centres should be situated" ([EMN, 2018: p.28](#)). Also, 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. [Terrón and Pinyol \(2018: p. 4\)](#) posited 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. However, they do not have the competencies to provide international protection.

Thus, concentrating immigration governance competencies at only the national level within the MLG devalues the essence of the framework, leading to power grabs and, conflicting situations and misunderstandings.

## 6. Multilevel Governance in Emergency Situations—The Case Study of the 2015-2016 Immigration Crisis

The much-unanticipated immigration crisis occurred in 2015. It was a year marked by episodes of human tragedy and refugees losing their lives while trying to reach Europe (Coman et al., 2020: p. 12). Both the national (the local level inclusive) and EU levels made various decisions during the immigration crisis in 2015-2016. Some of these decisions, taken in the different Member States, were similar, while others were bespoke to the challenges faced by particular Member States (EMN, 2018). Moreover, numerous politicians in Finland offered exciting and divergent views on how to change legislation and respond to demands from the EU level (Interview with JT, 2020). For instance, the then-leader of the True Finns Party, Timo Soini, expressed 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).

This view leans towards the anti-immigrant and anti-EU sentiments of immigration governance. Timo’s assertion contradicts the solidarity and burden-sharing that the EU seeks from its Member States. It was a challenging decision-making period that was out of the ordinary for the government, parliamentarians, politicians, civil servants, and other essential and less crucial actors. However, these authorities made swifter decisions to curtail the situation’s impact at the national level. Meanwhile, controversies and solidarity arrangements amidst some Member States’ defiances encased the EU level (Interviews with AA, AK, 2021; TK & IH, 2020). For instance, the European Council (2015: p. 3) adopted a Decision 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 decision, while Finland abstained. This example depicts the kinds of disagreements that engulfed the EU in those trial moments when they sought all possible means to resolve the crisis.

Moreover, the national leaders criticised the EU leaders for not providing sufficient tools, governance, and assistance to tackle the crisis (Interview with TK 2020). One reason for this perception of the EU’s failure is what Collett and Le Coz (2018: p. 4) noted 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, and indeed, Member States have created strikingly different national crisis-management mechanisms.

Since the Member States have different crisis response mechanisms, implementing

them on a common EU platform can lead to complex and entangled negotiations, disorderliness and misunderstandings. Hence, it is surprising that they perceived the EU failed them in resolving the situation, which, according to some respondents, triggered the development of the EU's New Pact for managing immigration (Interviews with RK, IH & JT, 2020; AA, 2021). Although yet to be introduced, this New Pact has met resistance from some Member States. For instance, the "Visegrad Four" have rejected it for being too relaxed and called for the EU to stop migration altogether and not just manage it (Euronews, 2020). Euronews (2020: para. 1-3) noted 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 quote above exemplifies the dynamics of the EU in handling the MLG of migration. Unanimity is crucial for the EU to execute its joint plan and programmes in the Member States. Hence, when there are oppositions, the EU cannot act accordingly in cases such as the failure of the relocation policy of the 2015-2016 migrant crisis and the unapproved European Agenda on Migration. Yet, the same Member States reverting to accusing the EU of failure is instead surprising. However, they expected the EU level to have provided leadership at that stage in most instances. The EU's apparatus is nevertheless dependent on the Member States to perform, although it seems to act on a higher level. Therefore, actions by the rebellious Member States have significant consequences 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, has still not been approved by the Member States (Interview with SN, 2021). However, in response to this failure by the EU, the Member States introduced new ways and instruments to curtail the ongoing crisis (EMN, 2018).

### **6.1. Finland's Reception Responses**

In Finland, the authorities established a Reception Centre at the Tornio border with Sweden. They registered between five hundred and eight hundred asylum seekers arriving in Finland, mainly from Sweden, in a day (Interviews with IH & JL, 2020). The introduction of the hotspot approach proved effective in many ways. For instance, the decision to establish the Centre in Tornio was because of its proximity to the border. This initiative eliminated the cost of transporting all the migrants to other Centres across the country before registering them. A respondent noted that such decisions came from higher-level officers who lauded it because most migrants were crossing into Finland through this Border (Interview

with IH, 2020). Meanwhile, the Police and Border Guards registered the applicants, and then the Finnish Immigration Service took over and made decisions on the applications collaboratively. The Police then served the decisions to applicants after the Finnish Immigration Service had made them. This collaborative effort yielded medium and long-term effects, consistent with what the EMN (2018: p. 18) argued: “Finland had a greater capacity to register all migrants at the border in northern Sweden before placements in the various reception centres”. This appraisal indicates collaboration during a crisis, which functioned well according to all the respondents. It was a chaotic situation in the beginning because they were overwhelmed with the necessary steps to follow. However, this unrest took a different turn when the authorities became acclimatised. They 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. However, intensive coordination at different levels enabled the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the measures adopted (EMN, 2018; Interviews with TK, IH, JL & PH, 2020). This coordination and collaboration depicted the relevance of MLG during the crisis.

During this period, it became evident that some asylum seekers applied in some cities, and it was uncommon for people to apply for asylum (Interview with IH, 2020). This unusual situation later became evident that these people came for diverse reasons, not necessarily seeking international protection or refuge, but primarily economic migrants who used the crisis as an opportunity to intrude. This discovery made the authorities introduce stringent measures to determine who is actually in need of protection (Interview with IH, 2020). For instance, “the Finnish Immigration Service suspended decision-making concerning Iraqi and Somali asylum seekers and stopped granting them international protection because they came from a particular area. It also halted the decision-making concerning Afghans until the assessment criteria and guidelines were updated” (EMN, 2017: p. 7). These actions by the authorities seemed harsh and inconsiderate on humanitarian grounds and the democratic reputation of Finland within the EU and the international community. For example, Wahlbeck (2019), as seen in (Vanto et al., 2021: p. 6) established that, “Finland has long supported international cooperation in refugee protection. Yet during the perceived crisis in the Autumn of 2015, Finland was reluctant to support EU-wide approaches to asylum policies, seeming to pursue national strategies instead,” which suggest some level of tensions.

## 6.2. Tensions in Collaboration

Politicians in government and opposition, crucial decision-makers, and other actors between the EU and Finland were equally actively engaged in the crisis resolution. There were, however, political tensions at the time between the parties that formed the government. Five different political parties 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 challenging. The partic-

ular case of Finland was that during the crux, the major opposition party in government was anti-immigrant and anti-EU in their policies and approaches, which even made Finland's dealing with the EU more difficult. [Pyrhönen and Wahlbeck \(2018: p. 8\)](#) noted 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 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 scepticism manifested when Finland did not vote on the relocation policy at the EU level, although they participated by accepting the correct number of proposed allocations ([Wahlbeck, 2019](#)).

Daily discussions and information flow among the authorities increased because they needed to regularly update themselves on the field situation, which influenced the decisions and measures taken. This claim is consistent with the [EMN's \(2018\)](#) argument that strategically distributing documents and communications concerning decisions enhanced transparency and the public's understanding. Since Finland received tenfold more asylum seekers and refugees during the crisis than its usual annual intake, all the institutions appreciated the situation and cooperated meaningfully to resolve the dilemma. This collaboration at the national level was expressed by one of the respondents as follows: So, one significant remark for that year was that we could work together with all the authorities, and in that way, we managed the situation quite well in Finland (Interview with TK, 2020).

The officials made decisions at the operational and policy levels during the crisis. Such decisions occurred within a short timeframe by relying on and amending existing policies and regulations and introducing new ones, mainly at the national level ([EMN, 2018](#)). Also, instead of relying entirely on policies, a situation-driven strategy was adopted to address the unforeseen situation of these immigration challenges. It exemplifies how human autonomy and agency activate the role of proactive measures in a crisis. This assertion depicts an example of a bottom-up approach as a supportive mechanism for top-down regulatory systems. It can be expected that policies generally fail during unprecedented situations, and if society must function effectively and restore order, the human agentic capability must take precedence. This research showed that some legislation on migration in Finland had been unused before the crisis. For instance, Finland had the hotspot approach as part of its legislation, which it never used until the 2015 crisis. These legislative tools were thus handy, coupled with new ones, to facilitate the approaches adopted in handling the situation. A respondent explained that:

Yes! We didn't make many crucial changes in our legislation. However, we created some new ways to work during the crisis as seen in [Table 1](#). We have/had a joint working group called the "Illegal Immigration Working Group". This group comprises representatives from several ministries and agencies, such as 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 establishes that the authorities did not make crucial changes during the chaos. However, EMN (2018: p. 11) evidence indicates that the Member States introduced essential changes in their official set-ups. 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 Finnish Immigration Service”. Also, “a new operating model was introduced; thus, the Finnish Immigration Service’s Senior Adviser, together with the Police, screened asylum applications at the Police departments after they filed them” (EMN, 2017: p. 10), different from regular decision-making concerning the asylum process. 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).

This research suggests that the Finnish authorities also concentrated on resolving the situation already in the Mediterranean countries and other first entry points into the EU (Interview with TK, 2020). Thus, this claim is consistent with what Wolff (2020: p. 246) asserts: that the EU, during this period, neglected legal migration and instead concentrated its efforts on finding ways to deal with irregular migration, border management, and asylum-seeking. This diversion of attention from the other form(s) of migration to concentrate resources and efforts on the crisis should have yielded better results, but the findings suggest otherwise. Finland expressed concern about how some people drove through other countries to reach their intended destinations.

**Table 1.** Timeline of key events during the 2015-2016 “immigration crisis” in Finland.

DATES	EVENTS/RESPONSES
29 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.
4 September 2015	A crisis management group was formed.
11 September 2015	The government published migration policies.
17 September 2015	The government decided to register all asylum seekers at registration centres.
22 September 2015	- Registration Centre opened in Tornio at the government’s decision. - The Finnish Immigration Service established a Situation Centre to report on happenings on the ground.
22 September 2015 - 29 February 2016	Registration centres operated across Finland, with over 16,000 asylum seekers registered.
24 September 2015	The Finnish Ministry of the Interior (MoI) established a working group on immigration.

**Continued**

September 2015	The Finnish 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). - The Finnish Immigration Service suspended decision-making on Afghanistan asylum seekers.
November 2015	- The MoI set up a project to review International Protection Residence Permit. - The Police and the Finnish Immigration Service adopted an operating model.
2 November 2015- 31 January 2016	The Finnish Ministry of the Interior undertook a project to review the criteria for residence permits on international protection.
27 November 2015	Ministerial working group on migration approved action plan.
8 December 2015	The government published an 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.
10 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 for serving positive decisions on asylum applications transferred from the Police to the Finnish Immigration Service.
16 May 2016	International Humanitarian protection as a residence permit category was removed from the Aliens Act.
1 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	A joint declaration on cooperation between Finland and Afghanistan was signed.
December 2016	Act on the Reception of applying for International Protection amended.

Source: Author's Construct (2024).

### 6.3. Governance across Multiple Levels during the Crisis

The EU's Commission announced proposals for new legislation to help ease the ongoing crisis. Thus, this solution introduced the European Agenda on Migration, which many criticised for not making significant impacts on supporting the Mem-

ber States' efforts. A majority of the interviewees expressed similar views on the EU's failure. For instance, one said:

I think the European Union 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's 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, 2020).

The respondents believed that national efforts superseded the EU-level ones. Still, another controversy is that the Member States have always been reluctant to hand 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. To underscore this, a respondent cited how the EU, in September 2020, presented a new Act on migration and asylum as a trial in preparation for handling any similar crisis in the future (Interview with TK, 2020). However, taking a different stance, [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.

The statement above sounds ideal because, even if there are measures or policies in place to manage crises when they arise, every situation will demand different approaches. Two separate crises will not be of the same magnitude and impact. Therefore, preparedness for an emergency can be superficial, although it could be handy. Thus, [Van Middelaar \(2020: p. 40\)](#) argued that “breaking the rules could actually equate to being true to the contract in emergency situations”. However, [Coman et al. \(2020\)](#) noted that the EU introduced the European Agenda on Migration in 2015 to respond to the flood of migrants arriving 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 was also aimed to equip the EU and the Member States with the necessary tools to manage migration better in the medium and long term regarding legal and irregular migration, border management and asylum. Therefore, the 2015–2016 crisis emphasised the significance of apt policies and measures needed to guide the efficient governance of immigration within the EU regularly and during an emergency. These arguments support the perceived failure of the EU to handle the 2015–2016 crisis as anticipated 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 through the

EU's level. Although it was a timely intervention, it remains vague why the EU waited until 2015 to introduce such a measure. It was rather too late to appreciably impact the inconsistencies, disunity, lack of solidarity, and disagreements among the Member States (European Commission, 2020). However, the European Agenda on Migration guided the EU's response to the immediate challenges. Yet, they did not fully achieve sustainable management of immigration as it is generally known and expressed by all the respondents since it was not impactful. For instance, Collett and Le Coz (2018: p. 4) noted that the EU and the Member States strove to contain the situation in all aspects, thus, from "border controls to humanitarian aid".

Still, the respondents believed that Finland instead managed the situation at the national level better without much reliance on the EU to provide the necessary instruments that were non-existent. At the same time, the politics concerning the situation heightened at all levels. 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. Thus, 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. Policies and rules can sometimes become useless in dire situations. Hence, national systems and policies must empower local authorities to act during emergencies. A respondent argued that decision-making during an emergency is 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 respondent held a similar view that:

The timeline was relatively quick and pretty strict in every aspect. In such cases, the role of the authorities like the Border Guard, Migri (Finnish Immigration Service), 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 this was the case, the question remains: How much powers and competencies does the EU possess in handling the migration problems of the entire Member States without taking over their sovereignty? This uncertainty is one reason why the EU played a subtle role in resolving the crisis. Many questioned the political leadership of the EU during the situation because the measures proposed by the Commission were insignificant (Interviews with RK, TK, 2020; JA, SS, 2021).

Meanwhile, discussions on the bigger picture were ongoing at the EU level on ways to support those countries that were experiencing the most impact of the crisis. For instance, the number of asylum seekers in countries like Germany, Austria, Sweden, and those in the southern parts of Europe increased. A respondent

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).

The number received in Finland was described as overwhelming because the numbers were considered high, and the phenomenon was unexpected. However, when the numbers started reducing after the peak of the crisis, Finland and some other Member States experiencing low applications took decisions like reducing the number of reception centres and relocating staff to places where they were relevant (EMN, 2018). This reduction also paved the way for authorities to divert attention to other fields of migration, like deportation and integration measures.

Following this, 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, which eventually was a fiasco (Geddes & Scholten, 2016). Thus, 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 fact that the Council agreed 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) (European Council, 2015: p. 5).

The statement 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 chanced upon to reject the implementation. The relocation was voluntary; hence, those Member States who found it necessary to help did so while others remained unconcerned, leading to its failure. As I have argued, working in such complex, sensitive, volatile, and dynamic relationships is challenging and problematic. The EU and the Member States have since enhanced migration and asylum policy cooperation. They want to see more responsibility-sharing and sol-

idity with one another, an instance depicted in the more recent situation in the Monia Reception Centre (European Commission, 2020). Also, the recently introduced pact of the EU details issues about collaboration. Thus, this new pact aims to facilitate sustainable solutions on solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility among the Member States.

The recently introduced “New Pact on Migration and Asylum” in response to the European Agenda on Migration’s failure focus on a holistic approach. 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). Likewise, 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 normal 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, fully in line with our values.

This argument by the European Commission is laudable, but whether it sees the day depends on the Member States’ unanimity. However, the usual contested issue remains what Collett and Le Coz (2018: p. 6) posit 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 had direct trickle-over effects on neighbouring countries during the crisis, with the EU having no particular influence. In Finland, for example, the strict legislative amendments in Sweden directly impacted the number of asylum seekers received at the reception centres. Also, 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).

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 amid the storm. Border management contributed significantly to the overall governance of immigration. Wahlbeck (2019: 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.

Thus, although Finland did not introduce physical border controls on the Schengen side, there were increased random patrols and searches of foreigners.

## 7. Conclusion

This article examined how the institutions in Finland collaborated and cooperated with the EU during the 2015-2016 immigration crisis in policymaking, decision-making, and implementation of these actions.

Despite these measures, the complexity of governing immigration has increased (European Commission, 2020) due to the increased flow of refugees and migrants after the 2015-2016 migrant crisis that challenged the EU. Thus, Dines et al. (2018) argued that the 2015-2016 immigration crisis has become a significant descriptor of specific events and a compelling device for structuring the knowledge of migration, policy decisions and governance structures. This intensification implies that well-coordinated programmes and policies, as well as proper solidarity mechanisms, are needed. Carmel (2014) argued that migration policymaking should be considered a governance problem that focuses on the implications of the interactions that combine the assessment of politics and the governing processes. I argue that these could be attainable by adequately harnessing the full potential of the MLG framework, although this seems to be a difficult task.

## Interviews

Interview with IH, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in September 2020.  
 Interview with TK, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in September 2020.  
 Interview with FL, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in September 2020.  
 Interview with HN, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in October 2020.  
 Interview with RK, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in November 2020.  
 Interview with LK, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in September 2020.  
 Interview with AA, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in September 2020.  
 Interview with JL, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in September 2020.  
 Interview with SN, 2021. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in June 2021.  
 Interview with PH, 2020. Interview over Teams with Amen Gokah in October 2020.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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