Interpersonal communication about politics among Russian migrants in Finland

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Abstract

This study is aimed to analyse interpersonal communication on politics among Russian migrants in Finland, and to find an answer to the question:
 What are the essentials of the interpersonal communication on politics among Russian migrants in Finland?

The study presents an exploration of scientific discussion on political communication. The research focuses political communication among citizens on interpersonal level, and considers different approaches, theories and findings in that field. Works of Huckfeldt et al. 2003, Kim and Kim 2008, Merelman 1998, Scheufele 2000, Schudson 1997 etc. were analysed and applied to current research. There is a considerable lack of research which would look at an intersection of political communication in interpersonal communication among migrants. This study attempts to fill in this theoretical gap.

This study seeks to contribute to the research field by investigating the following three aspects: first, the correlation between migrants' use of mass media and communication about politics within their social network; second, the tone of conversation in their social network and third, focus of their interest in the field of politics.

Primary qualitative data was gathered among Russian migrants in Finland with interpersonal and group interview method. The findings were investigated with the purpose of discovering to what extent political issues are a subject of interest of Russian migrants in Finland. The aspects of interpersonal communication of migrants about politics were analysed: discussions with social circles (family, friends, at work), approach towards mass media and political behaviour. Analysis was based on qualitative research method.

One of the most important findings of this analysis is that communication about politics among Russian migrants in Finland is various, and its focus depends on the field of one's interest and is limited by communication competence, especially language skills. Also it was necessary to build a new framework for future studies since the material available on the topic is limited.

The following types of migrants were identified in terms of their approach towards politics: active, idle and blocking. While use of internet, newspaper and active deliberation was typical for active migrants, TV and home discussion were the most prominent instruments neutral and neither use of media nor discussions were utilised by those with a negative relation towards politics.

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1 INTRODUCTION

As this research is concerned with aspects of political communication of Russian migrants in Finland, the literature review focuses on studies that discuss interpersonal communication in a political context.

Communication about politics among people has been a feature of human societies as long as politics have existed. Dependent on the form of state (democracy or some other political system) political communication has less or more appeal and possible risks as a choice of topic between citizens. The political communication in modern democracies has been researched a lot (see, for example, Kaid 2004). Most studies for decades have focused on mass communication level in their studies (Zaller, 1992), although a lot of research affirms the importance of political communication in interpersonal communication; for example, Zuckerman (ed.), (2005), Southwell and Yzer (2009) implicitly argue for it since they claim that social network is highly relevant for political beliefs and behaviour.

Nevertheless, there is some research available on level of interpersonal communication about politics, interest to which has increased lately (e.g. Huckfeldt et al. 2003, Kim and Kim 2008, Merelman 1998, Scheufele 2000, Schudson 1997). Based on those works it can be said that research came to wide scope of conclusions on the role and actual importance of communication about politics in interpersonal communication. But, particularly the factors contributing to the role of communication about politics in interpersonal communication have not been discussed much. This study aims at discovering some of these factors through qualitative research and building a base for a framework that can be used in future related studies.

In the existing literature there is a lack of details on the factors influencing communication about politics in interpersonal communication. More specifically the study aims at contributing to this mixed pool of opinions by investigating the topic in the context of Russian migrants in Finland. According to the Concise Oxford dictionary an immigrant is "a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country". For migrants issue in this work is also important question of

their socialization, as its levels in a new society might influence their interpersonal communication on politics.

Political deliberation of citizens is seen as a strong utility in developing democratic cohesion, for example, Barber (1984, p. 174) gives it most important role: "at the heart of a strong democracy is talk". This can be applied both to interpersonal and media communication. Therefore, citizens interest on politics and interpersonal communication on its topics has straight influence on functioning of democracy.

For this reason it is essential to research how, why and what people absorb and share as knowledge and opinions about politics. Nowadays in the 'global village' there are more and more migrants who move outside of their own country and therefore research of their habits in their new environment as well as their ties to their homeland, their interest and ties in politics has growing importance. For instance, in Finland migrants represent significant part of population, the number of non-native inhabitants is significantly increasing: according to the Finnish State Statistical Center (stat.fi), the number of migrants to Finland is high and it is still growing (Myrskylä, 2010): "The number of migrants to Finland has increased rapidly to nearly 30000 persons a year." Out of this number of Russian migrants is 50372 people in the time period of 1987-2009. Ones population of Russian migrants in Finland is growing, this group has potentially high opportunities in influencing political life of the country. Should be fascinating to see what are their approaches towards politics, in all its wide scope: country of interest, what channels are used for communication in interpersonal level, choices of media sources and voting habits.

2 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION ON POLITICS

2.1 Approaches towards interpersonal communication on politics

Political communication is a broad concept, which Swanson and Nimmo (1990, p. 9) define as "the strategic use of communication to influence public knowledge, beliefs, and action on political matters". It is a part of political culture, which, according to Inglehart (1997, p. 15) is "a system of attitudes, values, and knowledge that is widely shared within a society and transmitted from generation to generation". Political communication fulfils the function of transmission of political culture as well as its development through the time from generation to generation and within society, spreading it among citizens. Issues of political communication are spread through mass media and through everyday talk among people, though there is a debate in the field of political communication as to which one of the avenues prevails and which one is only secondary.

Some theorists argue that deliberation is essential for democracy but should be mediated though mass media. For example, Page (1996, p. 1) agrees that deliberation is a fundamental requirement for democracy. However, according to him, it is considerably mediated by professional communicators and communication on interpersonal level is not that important. Gastil (2000, p. 358) also recognizes face-to-face communication among citizens as an unimportant factor for deliberation processes, as he does not find convincing arguments for its necessity. Nevertheless, there are opposite opinions on this topic.

For example, Scheufele (2000, p. 727) points out that "discussion among citizens has long been identified as a necessary condition for a healthy and functioning democracy." This opinion is as well supported by Huckfeldt et al. (2003, p. 1) who also notes that "the vitality of democratic politics also depends on the capacity of citizens to disagree – to reject as well as to accept the viewpoints of others". Society, in which this open communication on political questions happens, he calls ideal in sense of deliberative democracy. There fore, situations, in which such a communication happens he considers important for exploring. At the same time, Scheufele (2000, p. 728) argues that "some types of discussion are more important for a functioning democracy than others". To develop this thought further, it can be argued that for a functioning democracy it is important that the majority of the members of the society participate to it, and migrants who became a noticeable part of society might have an important role in its work. To explore this

argument more, the different types of interpersonal communication on politics are discovered next in more details.

It is not established that people's talking or mentioning politics in their conversations can always be regarded as beneficial for political communication itself. There is debate on whether a discussion on politics will necessarily be followed by action or be reflected in one's behaviour generally. Scheufele (2000) and Kim and Kim (2008) argue that a discussion on politics fulfils the function of building an identification. In the scope of the current research this might mean that migrants might use politics as a bond with their peers as a common topic to discuss. Returning to the subject of this chapter, there are different ways through which interpersonal communication on politics is described: discussion, talk, conversation, or instrumental deliberation – and these seemingly similar acts are often distinguished and opposed.

Scholars have contributed a range of researches on deliberation and its functions, in sense of public and collective decision making and interpersonal deliberation (Elster, 1998, as cited in Carpini et al. 2004, Schudson, 1997, Scheufele, 2000, Habermas 2005 etc.). For example, Schudson (1997) as well shares the idea which is supported by other theorists (e.g. Scheufele, 2000) that interpersonal communication about politics can be divided into two distinctive categories which both are important for the functioning of democratic society: political talk and sociable conversation.

Going into the subject, Schudson (1997, p. 298), has noticed that the first one, political talk, is a key aspect of deliberative democracy and, according to him it is "essentially oriented to *problem-solving*" and the result of political talk would be (idem. p. 305) "signed petition, a posted notice, a written law, a written judicial opinion, a written executive order". As it was stated earlier, this definition coincides with the approach Kim and Kim (2008) takes towards "instrumental deliberation". Nevertheless according to Kim and Kim's instrumental deliberation does not necessarily have to lead towards political act. Habermas (2005, p. 388), as well, has described two types of political deliberation, where first one happens among citizens in private situations and second one is done by politicians in official cases.

Schudson finds political talk uncomfortable for its participants, as it is a place where confronting ideas meet. Huckfeldt et al. (2003, p. 5) as well points out the importance of dissent in political communication for deliberation processes, citizen's ability to tolerate disagreement, and its inconvenience for participants: "when disagreement is encountered, it is likely to be an unpleasant event that produces psychic and social discomfort". Also, they add that citizens tend to avoid this type of communication.

It should be noted, that previous studies have not yet provided information on how these two types of communication about politics takes place among migrants. This would be an interesting topic to discover as well to see if it has a special characteristics when compared to the general citizen's interpersonal communication on politics. In particular, the place of disagreement in migrants political communication needs special attention, as this kind of disagreement is a sign of a healthy democracy. Using Huckfeldt's and Schudsons's lines of analysis further, sociable conversation is addressed next.

Sociable conversation, according to Schudson (1997, p. 302), is a kind of discussion where people mostly feel comfortable. In this type of communication, shared opinions are reinforced and people's own ideas are tested and formulated to be certain that: "they agree on fundamentals and that the assumptions that they share will make such experimentation safe." At the same time, Schudson (idem, p. 305) argues that the same sociable conversation is unimportant for political communication in deliberative democracy as it happens accidentally and "nothing in the conversation itself suggests democracy".

Scheufele (2000) has described everyday political communication, political talk between friends, relatives and acquaintances as 'dialogic' since it does not have any certain goals, but rather helps to create and support social network and interpersonal relations. Though Scheufele (2000, p. 729), supports Schudson's idea about different functions of political talk and sociable conversation, he does not entirely agree that sociable conversation does not support democracy, and calls Schudson's distinction of political talk and conversation too simplistic. According to Scheufele, both forms rather support development of "a healthy, functioning democracy." This statement makes the

assumption that our everyday communication, even through short conversations and exchange of opinions on politics, is essential for deliberative democracy.

There is another distinction given by Kim and Kim (2008, p. 51), where they imply that deliberation has two levels which are necessary for deliberative democracy: instrumental deliberation and dialogic deliberation. The first one is "a procedural tool, through which people negotiate and make decisions", the second one is a "dialogue, through which people construct the concept of the self and other, the sense of community, and public reason". Nevertheless, they mention (idem. p.53) as well that these two types of deliberation in certain occasions, like town hall discussions happen at the same time and there are no straight clear cut between these two functions. In their work Kim and Kim, akin to Scheufele, find that conversation stimulates development of deliberative democracy through political talk; personal identities are constructed, mutual understanding is achieved and public reason is produced from discussed opinions.

From the overview above, it is apparent, that there is a variety of approaches to the topic of discussion and there is no unified opinion among researchers about the role everyday interpersonal communication about politics plays in furthering citizens' knowledge on politics or their political participation. Nevertheless an inevitable mutual influence between the socio-political context and communication is apparent. Next the influence of contextual factors on communication is discussed. After that the impact of interpersonal communication on the individual's sociological context will be analysed.

2.2 Contextual factors for the individual's political communication

There are several easily identifiable fora of an individual's political communication: online discussions, mass media, and social interactions with family, friends and colleagues. These are considered in closer detail below.

Nicodemus (2004, p. 315) notes that social settings in which citizens discuss political issues are "an important antecedent of political participation." Also many researchers agree (Verba 1961, Campbell et al. 1960, Lazarsfeld et al. 1968, Lane 1959, Huckfeldt et al. 2003, Weimann, 1994) that immediate social cycles influence personal opinions and choices when it comes to politics. For example, Verba (1961 p. 4) states that "primary groups of all sorts mediate political relationships at

strategic points in the political process. They are the locus of most political decision-making, they are important transmission points in political communications, and they exercise a major influence on the political beliefs and attitudes of their members." As Beck et al. (2002, p. 69) note: "By identifying the ties between individuals and their environments – by bringing into perspective the social calculus of voter choice – we move closer to a better understanding of citizenship and political choice within and, potentially among, democratic political systems". Therefore, people's interactions within their immediate social circles - family, friends, work-mates, and neighbours – are the focus of rest this chapter.

There is a variety of studies which approach political communication on the group communication level (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960; Lazarsfeld et al. 1968, Zuckerman 2005; Lane 1959; Huckfeldt et al., 2003; Weimann, 1994). Zuckerman (2005, p. 3) underlines the importance of citizens' social circles for their attention to political issues: "It is both obvious and well known that the immediate social circumstances of people's lives influence what they believe and do about politics". Southwell and Yzer (2009, p. 1) assume that "social network density might affect the translation of mass media messages into public sentiment." So, social circumstances have an impact on citizen's knowledge about politics, on their political acts and as well initiate transition of mass media issues to the wide community and gives topics for interpersonal discussions.

Addressing the differences between the influence of the mass media and social circles on citizens' trust in the disseminated information, Lazarsfeld et al. (1968, p. 150) state two reasons which make personal relationships more influential than formal media. First, they have more coverage, and, secondly, they have certain psychological advantages. Nevertheless, Lazarsfeld et al. (idem.) add that belonging to a group does not necessarily mean following the group's political choice when it comes to voting.

As previously mentioned, citizens prefer to exchange their political opinions in a group that shares their attitudes. For example, Eulau (1986, p. 38) implies that an individual's political behaviour is likely to vary with the type of social groups he or she belongs to. Huckfeldt et al. (2003, p. 474) also assume that political discussion is probable to happen in a social context with similar opinions: "in the event that people discuss public affairs at all, they tend to do so in the company of like-

minded others". Citizens tend not only to share similar attitudes with social groups they belong to, but, according to Campbell et al. (1960, p. 293), this leads to a reinforcement of their view points: "when primary groups engage in political discussions and are homogeneous in basic member viewpoints, the attitudes of the individual must be continually reinforced as he sees similar opinions echoed in the social group." This advances the discussion towards a consideration of the groups a citizen's opinions are likely to follow.

Talking about the structure of social ties, Zuckerman (2005, p. 3) points out that the complexity of social connections influences the political cohesion of social groups. Also Southwell and Yzer (2009, p. 3) state that the connections and density of a certain social network are likely to influence the effect of conversation occurring within that network.

On another note, Lazarsfeld et al. (1968, p. xxxii) discuss group influence on a person's opinion and the importance of the group for people's identity building. He points out that an individual tries to get away from propaganda, as it threatens his attitudes, and finds his own ideas reinforced in personal contacts with members of his group. Further, individuals, as members of the same group, will share similar attitudes and show similar selective tendencies.

By linking these two ideas together one can conclude that the denser the social network, the more likely it is that a citizen will rather engage in personal communication than listen to manipulated political media e.g. propaganda. The more one discusses politics with his environment, the more likely it is that s/he will have a strong opinion on the situation – and this view is likely to be similar to views within this person's social circle.

In a similar argument, Campbell et al. (1960) underlines the importance of social opinion for individuals' perception and judgement on politics, stating that "the ambiguity of the merits of political objects and events is such that people are dependent upon 'social reality' to support and justify their political opinions". More specifically, Lane (1959, p. 189 as cited in Zuckerman 2005) contemplates the strong influence of the immediate social circle, saying that: "groups orient a person in a political direction specifically by (a) redefining what is public and private in their lives, (b) providing new grounds for partisanship […]." This enforces the suggestion discovered earlier:

communication with close peers is more important in shaping one's political stand than information from other sources such as media. This thesis will further seek support for this idea.

As for one's direct environment, social capital theory has distinguished outer and inner social circles. Where to outer belong those with whom individuals have weaker ties (Ellison et al. 2006) like class-mates, co-workers, health-care personal, etc. To the inner - those with whom one has strong ties, close persons, like family and friends. Addressing these theories in the context of this research, social networks should play an important role in migrants communication and thus they are one of the subjects of this work. As well, based on social capital theory's distinction of social circles the role of these social circles in an individual's political communication is discussed.

2.2.1 The role of inner social circles in citizen's communication about politics

Among the social groups listed earlier, family is recognized to have influence on individual's attitudes, ideology and social values (Alesina & Giuliano 2009). Research implies that the strength of family ties influences migrants' behaviour in a new country. Specifically, correlation was found between family ties strength and political activity: "individuals with strong family ties do not engage much in political activity, and are less interested in public policies" (idem, p. 13). Results of quoted research is particularly relevant as it was based on immigrant families: "the strength of family ties has the same effect of having primary education" (idem. p. 12).

In the field of political communication, family is often discussed in respect of its role in children's political socialization (for example: Austin & Pinkleton, 2001; Chaffee et al. 1973; Liebes & Ribak, 1992; Meadowcroft, 1986 as cited in Richardson 2003), where communication between younger and older generation has a positive impact on their interest in politics (Beck and Jennings 1991, p. 760): "People do tend to carry important political dispositions "inherited" from their parents into adulthood". In the wake of these findings the current research assesses the impact of family ties on the individual's interpersonal communication about politics because they are an important social link and context for migrants. Next the, role of the working place in citizen's communication about politics is discussed.

The working place was found as another important site for political communication. To start with, all Lazarsfeld et al. (1968, p. 137) noted in their book: "people who work or play together are likely to vote for the same candidates". According to Mutz and Mondak (2006, p. 140) it is as well the place which is "the social context best positioned to facilitate cross-cutting political discourse." So, at the workplace people are not only most likely to discuss politics, but also to hear different opinions: workplace (idem., p. 140) was reported as a most likely place where opinions would be voiced and confronted. Thereby this point is essential for this research in sense of finding out the migrants communication outside their family, i.e. it is important to examine how much this function is valid at working places with international environment, for Russian migrants in Finland. Figure 1 Shows inner social circles relevant to interpersonal communication on politics, identified above.
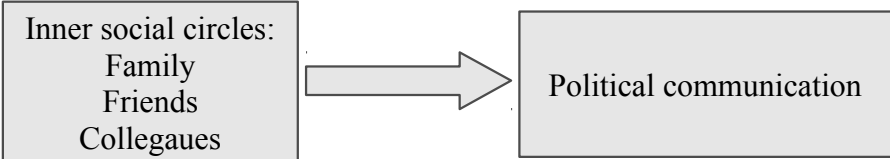
Figure 1: Social Circles

2.2.2 The impact of education on political engagement

There is research showing relation between news perception and education, as well as strong connection between education and political engagement (e.g., Shields and Goidel 1997; Verba et al., 1996; Converse 1972 as cited in Hillygus p. 26). Even though mass media has a great influence on citizen's knowledge of political situation as a main source of political news, Price and Zaller's (1993 p. 138) research has shown that the personal level of education plays principal role in propensity to know the news.

When Hillygus (2005, pp. 22-23) analysed the reasons why education can have such an influence on democratic political engagement, he implied that verbal skills which students gain during education enhance developing language and civic skills. That, in turn, has a positive effect on political engagement. However due to the size of this research there will not be a systematic

analyses of education as a variable although it is expected that people with a higher level of education would have more critical view of the news. Nevertheless, in my choice of respondents by level of education I try to keep balanced between people who have a university degree and people who do not in order to capture a certain variety of the migrant community.

The influence of education on political engagement is displayed in Figure 2.
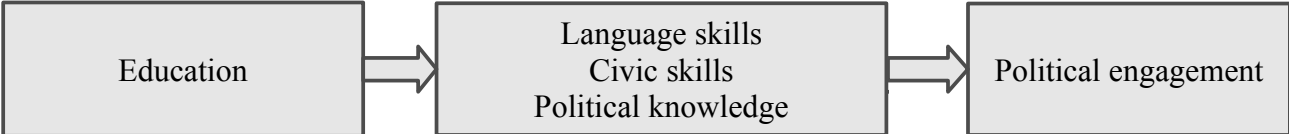
Figure 2: The impact of education on political engagement

The previous finding about the impact of education is essential for our research, in sense of dichotomising respondents by level of education. It can be noted, that factual political knowledge is a valuable indicator for the level of media use – the citizen's knowledge on current happenings on local and national political scene (Scheufele 1998) which, in turn, can be an indirect indicator of persons' involvement into political discussions. Background political knowledge, according to Price and Zaller (1993, p. 134) can predict basic familiarity with actual news, and even more self-reported media use, interpersonal communication, and educational achievements. First, political knowledge will be discussed, followed by the analysis of media usage as a form of communicational knowledge.

2.2.3 Relation between interpersonal communication and political knowledge

There is implication, given by Nicodemus (2004, p. 161) that brings up requirements of democratic processes to citizens' skills, which assume that a citizen should: "develop and exercise skills that allow them to deliberate mindfully, think publicly, and collaborate democratically". Though this definition is quite wide, it underlines the importance of communication competence as a part of civic skills which are crucial for political communication. Similarly, Shah et al. (2009, p. 102) states that "chief among the repertoire of civic competencies required for political socialization is *communication competence*". This question deserves deeper consideration and is developed further in this research. Therefore, further in this chapter are considered citizens skills, consumption of

political news and political communication as elements of wider concepts as civic competence and civic engagement.

The consumption of political news and engagement in political communication are linked to political knowledge. The relation between communication and political knowledge and their reciprocal influence has been paid noticeable attention to by range of scientists (Price and Zaller 1993; Eveland and Scheufele, 1998; Kim and Kim 2008, etc.). Notably, those who participate to political discussions are more probable to have a better factual political knowledge and understanding of political process than those who do not (Eveland and Scheufele, 1998). Next I refer to citizens' social skills and communication competence.

Communication competence is strongly connected with interpersonal communication regarding politics and it denotes a range of abilities, which Shah et al., (2009, p. 102), with reference to other scientists, define as: "a meta-concept represented by a range of discrete indicators of family communication patterns, deliberative activities in school, news media use, and interpersonal discussion (Chaffee et al., 1973; Hess, 2002; McLeod, 2000)." Shah et al. (2009, p. 102) imply that there is interconnection and interdependency among different components of communication competence such as grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic (Canale and Swain, 1980). Interpersonal discussion as well as media use, according to Shah et al, (2009, p. 115), are assumed in all aspects of communication competence, and they create a number of outcomes consequential for civic competence.

The discussion above brings up question of citizenship as result and essential part of political communication when it is leading to developing of democratic process. Citizens' political communication and civic engagement turn to be categories, which might have mutual influence. More specifically, Scheufele (1998) has mentioned indirect and direct indicators of citizenship. As indirect indicators he mentioned opinion quality and information levels among the public (Scheufele 1998 p. 730). Never the less, his research was directed towards investigating direct indicators of citizenship, which are "political knowledge and political participation" (Scheufele 1998, p. 39). Levels of information and opinion quality i.e. indirect indicators of citizenship can be as well used as indicators of citizens' political communication.

Also, Wilkin et al. (2008, p. 388) with the reference to Ball-Rokeach et. al. (2001), and Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006), provide a definition of civic engagement: "civic engagement is a product of a strong neighbourhood storytelling network – a triangulated network of residents in their social networks, geo-ethnical media (i.e., local/and/or ethnically targeted media), and community/non-profit organizations working together to story tell the community". These three components of civic engagement citizens' communication are to some extent important for our research as they are as well components of citizens' political communication. Although the framework of this research does not allow us to check the functionality of residents' network, at least media use and community organizations are considered in this study.

Shah et al. (2009, p. 102) define communication competence "as encompassing *media use*, particularly public affairs news consumption via broadcast, print, and on-line sources, and *interpersonal communication,* in terms of discussion of public affairs and politics at home, in school, and among peers". Though Shah et al. were formulating this term in relation to the youth, it is considered relevant for this research, because the young are creating their understanding of world around and the place of politics in it and talk about it, just as migrants do.

Nevertheless since the focus of the current work is on adults, "school" and "peers" are replaced with "work" and "friends". Given these parallels Shah et al. (idem) work matches the characteristics of this research. More specifically the term communication competence is embraced as a measure of migrants approach towards media and interpersonal communication about politics in this research. The importance of migrants' political knowledge and civic engagement is apparent as one of aspects of their integration into a new society.

The mutual influence of civic competence and communication competence on political knowledge is displayed in Figure 3.

Civic competence	⟷	Communication competence (grammatical, sociolinguistic, Strategical. Interpersonal communication and media use)	⟷	Political knowledge socialization

Figure 3: The impact of civic competence and communication competence on political knowledge and socialization

Next, the usage of media as part of communication competence in political communication is looked at.

2.2.4 Mass media in perception of politics

Mass media is a source of information which is constantly bringing topics for discussion: as Tard pointed out "every morning the papers give the public the conversations for the day" (1898/1969 p. 312). While the media provides topics for conversation, conversation, in turn, processes news into social discussion: Schudson (1997 p. 304) in his discussion of conversation roles implies that it "translate the public into the sociable". Further he claims that: "democratic conversation is in part dependent on, parasitic on, the prior existence of a public word – often available in print" (Schudson 1997 p. 304). As a result Schudson sees mass media as a tool for initiating interpersonal conversation in society. However, it is relevant to investigate what is the source of news and debates that the migrants are following: the media of their home country, of their adopting country and/or other international media sources. In the first case, when migrants are following the news and the rhetoric from their home country, this may result in quite the opposite effect of Schudson was arguing for, more specifically migrants may be inclined to avoid topics concerning the relationship between the home country and the adopting country as they anticipate irreconcilable differences.

Kim and Kim (1999, p. 361) have supported with empirical data the idea that there is co-variation between media use and frequency of political conversation in daily life both at general and issue-specific levels. Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous paragraph, there may be other factors influencing the relationship between media use and frequency of political communication. As neighbouring countries often have competing histories, it is precisely the context of migrants to a neighbouring country that may create significant difference from the general co-variation between media use and the frequency of politics related interpersonal communication.

Deeper research of citizens' news perception has its own advantages and disadvantages, as Price and Zaller's (1993) analysis has shown. As news are received from a wide variety of mass media sources each with a different way of presenting political news, it is difficult to measure people's involvement in political news perception. For example, the variety and amount of mass media sources a person uses and the actual amount and quality of political news s/he receives can give low correlation (idem, p. 136). This is relevant in sense of active and passive reception of information. My hypothesis is that people would remember and report mostly about sources of information they are actively using. Therefore, a qualitative research method is employed in this study, which is discussed in more detail in the chapter on methodology.

The issue of news perception brings up the possibility of further development of political opinions as well: "only people who actually acquire information from the news can use it in forming and changing their political evaluations" (idem, p. 134). Mass media is told to provide people with the topics and words for further discussion, as Noelle-Neumann claims: "provide people with words and phrases they can use to defend a point of view" (Noelle-Neumann 1984, p. 173). Even Tard (1898/1969, p. 304) already a century ago argues that mass media gives topics for discussion for the society and that people "are forced to follow the groove of their borrowed thoughts. One pen suffices to set off a million tongues". Also, Matthew et al. (2004, p. 891) notice that according to their results, newspaper use and discussion show a significant interaction.

There is a relation between the type of the news citizens consume and the probability of political conversation, thus Scheufele (2000, p. 729) claims that hard news on television and newspapers contents' apply more to political conversation. Under soft news he understands: life stories and happenings in people's ordinary life, entertainment, programs about cooking, etc. Hard news as they were defined by the Scheufele (2000, p.739) are news which have discussion on politics, economy, government and social issues from international to local levels. As well the analyses of the same news received from different sources gives better view of situation in political world and "may provide a stronger cognitive base for political participation than factual political knowledge". (Sotirovic and McLeod 2001, p. 273). My hypothesis is that in post-communist countries, after decades in which political news came from only one source, citizens value more the possibility to

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have a plurality of angles of the same piece of news. Therefore Russian migrants also may be expected to search for news from different sources.

As stated above, there is a direct correlation between interpersonal communication and the probability of individuals' reception of news and more specifically, on citizens' interest in political news. As far as the relation between citizens interpersonal communication and mass media use, according to Price and Zaller (1993), in some cases citizens trust interpersonal communication channels more than mass media, although they carry less detailed information. Due to this apparent significance of interpersonal communication, some questions on political discussion from Price's and Zaller's work are considered in the current research, e.g. "how many days in the past week did you talk about politics with your family and friends" (idem, p. 162). However, separate questions are formulated on "friends" and "family" to help discovering the structure of the respondents' interpersonal communication. The time period specified in the question is extended, too, as the current research is not limited to the time frame of researching a political campaign. Further, Price's and Zaller's set of questions concerning general political knowledge is highly practical and are partly used in this research, too. [See Appendix 2]

Southwell and Yzer (2009, p. 1) discuss several hypotheses, concerning interaction between campaign messages, interpersonal interaction and voting decisions. They assume that interpersonal communication might be prompted by the form of campaign message, and conversation, in turn, "might be a crucial link between campaign efforts and key political outcomes." As well they point out the importance of time in predicting when talk will have an effect on elections.

Bennett et al. (2000, p. 118) further refers to some conversations as being instances of political participation if it is a persuasive dialogue in order to mobilize the interlocutor on behalf of an issue, cause or party. The findings above are summarised in Figure 4.

Since the data of the current research consists of self-reported descriptions of one's political communication behaviour, information about what triggers such instances of communication is not systematic. More research could be carried out in the future to analyse the interaction between campaign and political communication between migrants.

| Mass Media: News Campaigns | → | Political knowledge | → | Political communication and decisions |
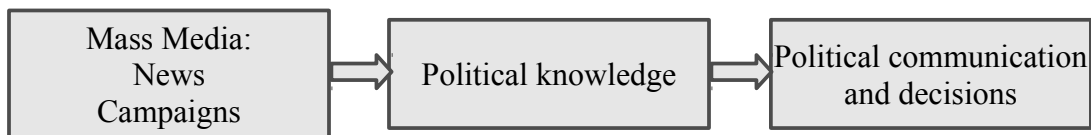
Figure 4: Mass media and political activities

While so far the traditional forms of media was addressed, there is an ever growing conductive platform that facilitates both mass and personal communication: the internet. The next section takes a look at the internet and its role in political communication.

2.2.5 Internet in interpersonal communication on politics

The internet as a relatively new resource of verbal interaction brings as well new ways and possibilities of political communication. Ultimately, the internet is the most comprehensive conductor of information. Related to the current research, there is broad range of theories regarding internet influence on traditional forms of political communication.

In the current age of information technology, on-line interactions represent another important arena of social communication. As such, web-communication is also analysed. This thesis strives to see whether people are using web-services in relation to political communication, and if so, in what respect and to what extend. As internet services give access to the media news sites, it is a tool for communication about politics (public affairs), with citizens' immediate social circles (family, work-mates, neighbours). Internet users may find friends or acquaintances through blogs, discussion forums, social network sites. In analysing political communication among Russian migrants in Finland, this thesis particularly aims to look into the language of these sources and their country of origin.

The internet has double use comparing to the traditional media sources because there is possibility to share own thoughts with others, which means that one can share it with many people at the same time. One can spread own news. In a way it is inverted mass media – from individual to the world.

Some theorists say that deliberation process can be held through the internet as successfully as in face-to-face communication or, probably, even become its substitution (see, for example: Barber, Mattson, and Peterson, 1997; London, 1993 etc., as cited in Gastil 2000). On the contrary, Southwell and Yzer (2009 p. 6) say that the internet cannot replace the traditional way of communication, but rather enrich it: "The internet is likely to extend, not diminish, the role of talk between people".

Yet, there is a different opinion on the role of interactive services on citizens' life. While these technologies allow the network to spread out across geographic space and might even enhance contacts outside the home (e.g., arranging a meeting at a restaurant or a bar), they seem, however, to lower the probability of having face-to-face visits with family, neighbours, or friends in one's home (Boase et al. 2006; Gershuny 2003; Nie, & Hillygus 2002). Nie and Hillygus imply that influence of internet on face-to-face communication depends much on the time and place of its use – weekend or weekday, home or at work, where use of internet on weekend and home has negative effect on face-to-face social contacts, and on weekday at work – does not.

From these findings it can be concluded that the internet is changing the way how people consume information and interact with others and it has a profound influence on one's view of the world and more specifically politics. In the context of migrants' political discussions, two specific aspects of the use of the internet is apparent. The availability of information on the internet is not restricted in general by technical or geographical limitations and - as long as the reader has the necessary skills – provides political news and insights in many different languages (Figure 5). These attributes make the internet a very special tool for communication as it is.
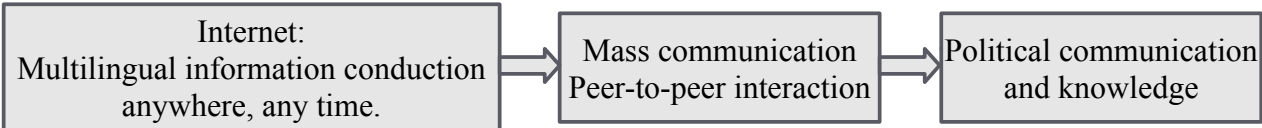

Figure 5: Internet and communication on politics

This concludes the overview of the contextual factors impacting interpersonal communication. Next, the individual's political communication's influence on one's socio-political environment will be discussed.

2.3 The impact of interpersonal communication on the socio-political context

While interpersonal communication on politics is an essential part of deliberation democracy, there are different conclusions on the role of deliberation in current democratic societies and the ways of its mediation. One of these approaches is chosen to explain one's socio-political context, together with a discussion on how communication influences political participation which is another important contextual topic.

2.3.1 Social comfort, conceptualisation and political decision-making

Based on the arguments above this thesis has adopted the framework proposed by Kim and Kim (2008), Schudson (1997) and Huckfeldt et al. (2003), where talk is understood as uncomfortable situation where confronting ideas meet, and which has influence on citizen's political views and attitudes. Conversation, however, is comforting as political ideas are reinforced. This in turn has an impact on one's situational comfort, socio-political self and peer conceptualisation and one's political decisions. It is understood that both talk and discussion are involved in political communication. Talk is needed, for example, in making decisions like voting, while the conversation is crucial in constructing understanding of socio-political self and peer identity as pictured in Figure 6. The latter is more relevant for the research of interpersonal communication of migrants on politics.
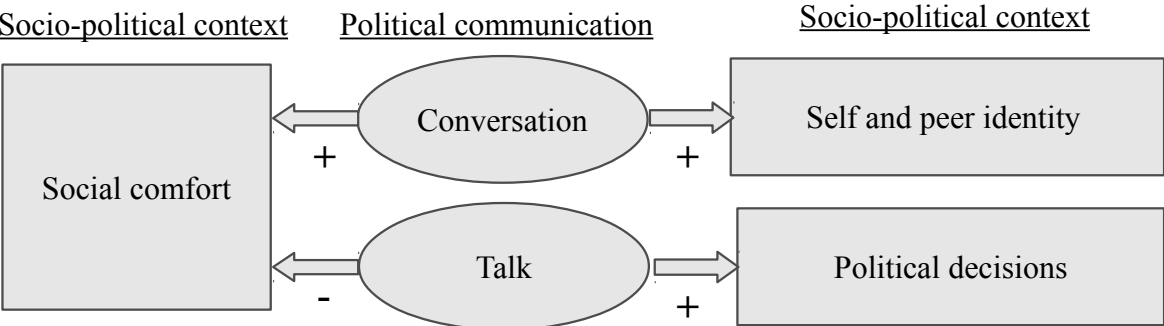
Figure 6: The influence of political communication on the soico-political context

2.3.2 Political participation

As it was stated before, there is a strong interconnection between political communication and political participation. An important aspect of interpersonal communication in terms of its influence on political participation is its persuasive use in politics. For instance, Schudson's (1997, p. 298) approach towards political talk and Kim and Kim's (2008) "instrumental deliberation" is such, that as a key aspect for deliberative democracy it should lead towards some political act.

Apart from interpersonal communication and its influence on political participation, there are other factors which have their impact. Brady et al. (1995, p. 271) describe the socio-economic status (SES) model as part of a wider resource model of political participation. The SES model explains political activity based on one or more of the components of socio-economic status: education, income and occupation. According to Verba et al. (1995) Socio-economic status is one of the factors influencing political participation beside time, money, and civic skills. The ability to communicate and to perform in front of an audience – the skills which are important for persuasive political communication and participation - develop through social interaction. The access to and quantity of the social resources utilised in this interaction depend on the person's socio-economic status.

Education, as a part of socio-economic status, has as well its influence on political participation. According to Sotirovic and McLeod (2001, p. 288): "education provides knowledge and skills to handle information and consequently enhances access to the political process, or at least makes participation more likely."

Brady et al. (1995) find civic skills greatly important such as the ability to present and defend one's own opinion while performing in front of an audience or in interpersonal communication which in turn is mainly facilitated through speech communication. It is not known yet, if this factors have the same influence for those citizens, who has moved to live in another country. As well it is not known, if factors, which have direct influence on political participation are valid for communication about politics, although these concepts do overlap. Factors from the SES model are taken into account during the research of migrants communication about politics. Though questions about

education and occupation of migrants during this research were asked, question about income was considered as inappropriate.

In their research on political activities of American citizens, Brady et al. (1995) establish a correlation between voters and active political participants, which in turn depends on citizens' demographic, economic and social status as well as their dependence on government programs. They consider not only political participation but also its quantity, measuring its expenses in terms of time and money. As this research was made in USA, the conclusions, which are true for the American society, might not be generalised and applied to the Finnish and Russian societies. Nevertheless, the factors, which were found to be important - demographic, economic and social status as well as the citizens' dependence on government programs, are taken into account in this research and their influence on respondents' interpersonal communication is investigated.

In spite of the discussion above, according to the recent research completed by Bishin and Klofstud (2009, p. 29) there is no apparent influence of political discussion on migrants participatory habits. Further, they (idem, p. 2) found out that "the relationship between political talk and political participation is not statistically significant for migrants, suggesting that political discussion is not a sufficient means by which to encourage foreign born citizens to participate in civil society." This reinforces the earlier argument that talk is not as significant as an influential factor for migrants as discussions.

It should be noted here that political participation is characterized as a secondary question in this study. The aim is to shed light on how active respondents' political communication is and if it is leading to political participation. As the main focus, political communication specific to migrants is discussed in lights of the findings above next and then a framework is built based on the same findings to provide a foundation for research methodology and data analysis.

2.4 Migrants' political communication

Recent research (Bishin and Klofstad, 2009, p. 2) shows, that "while migrants are as likely to engage in discussions as native born citizens, they are less likely to share politically-relevant

information during such conversations". As well they point out that information exchange is less likely due to migrants weaker political predispositions than native born citizens.

Migrants political communication has its own character, as it covers the above discussed issues like close social circles for interpersonal communication, media use, and adds the habits of communication brought from country of origin and their transition or the lack of such a transition. New citizens face not only new social circles (and necessity to create them), new mass media, new language, but new communication habits and rules in a new society as well, which might be more difficult adapting to than even to a new language, as it requires not only learning words, but, sometimes, a new way of thinking. Esser in his review (2006) underlines importance of language knowledge among immigrants: "because it fulfils a number of functions, language has a particularly significant role to play in the process of individual and societal integration." Language knowledge is particularly significant for immigrants, as it is a key to social contacts and understanding of a new society.

Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009, p. 15) note, that there is a range of "systematic or theoretically elegant analysis of the modes and trajectories of migrant political incorporation" and they speculate that the topic of migrants incorporation into politics can be quite significant. As well Jones-Correa's (2005, p.77) discussion about understanding of incorporation ranges most widely, from simply an individual's law-abiding residence in a polity to full engagement with "the *process* of democracy".

To continue, Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009, p. 20) have described the difficulties of migrants incorporating with politics by the example of Moroccans migrating to Paris as they find scarce "a sparse environment of political parties, civic networks, and advocacy groups with which to connect. Many are residentially isolated in small suburbs without political clout". They might find it difficult to create new social connections outside their own community and that can be reason that "they may find engagement with home-country politics or religious activities more rewarding than efforts to break into a strange and hostile political process." (idem, p. 20). It is interesting to see how this findings are relevant for this research, if Russian respondents in Finland as Moroccan migrants in Paris have similar tendencies and problems in their approach towards politics. These ethnological

challenges migrants face and can be reflected in their political communication is summarized in Figure 7.
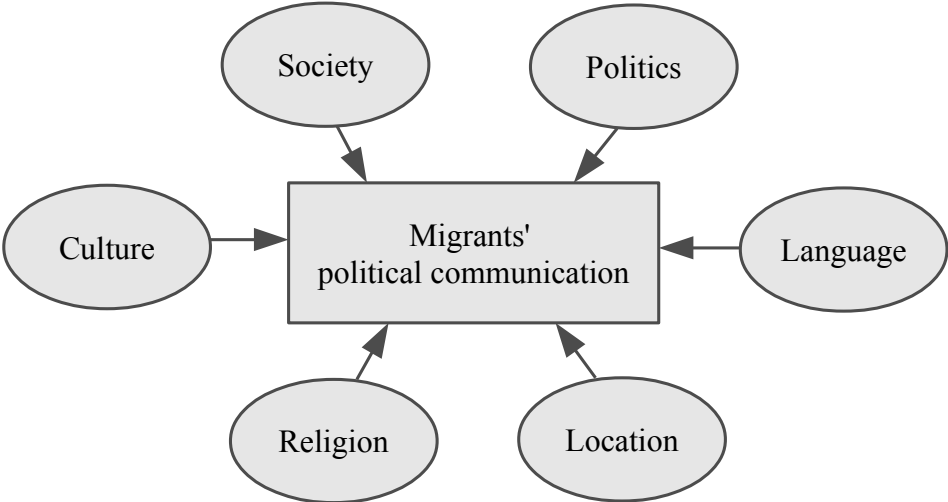
Figure 7: Migrants' ethnological challenges for political communication

2.5 The contextual influence framework of interpersonal communication on politics

As this research is focused on the aspects of interpersonal communication, the literature review so far covered issues that bring together that and its political context: individuals' perception of political mass media, internet, social environment, personal education and knowledge. It was observed that   political communication has an influence one one's socio-political factors as well as on political participation.   Finally, it took a specific look at migrant's political communication. Figure 8 summarizes the network and impact of these factors.
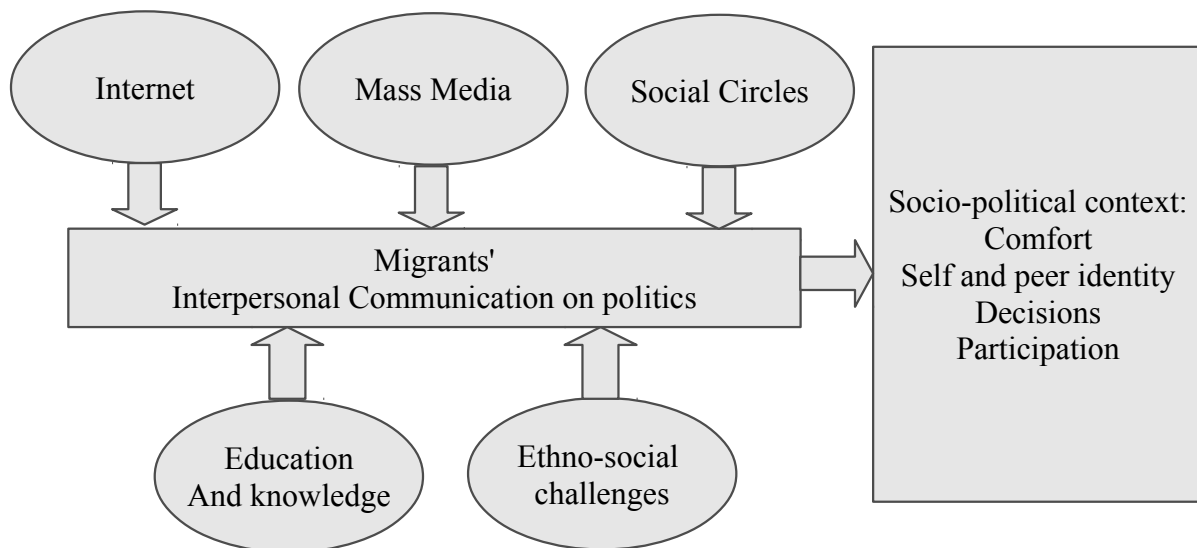
Figure 8: The contextual influence framework of migrants' political communication

To conclude, the existing research offers a number of hypotheses regarding factors related to political communication of individuals. The approaches these hypotheses take are quite divergent. Nevertheless, they agree that the nature and level of political topics in one's interpersonal communication is dependent on external and personal factors that form the communicational context. In the other direction, discovering the substance on political communication might give an insight into the contextual factors migrants face. This notion is taken into consideration in the development of the research method used in this study, which is presented next.

3 METHOD

3.1 Research Structure

The aim of the research is to find out patterns of interpersonal communication about politics of Russian migrants in Finland. Framework of the research is based on the inductive approach, as through exploring patterns and details of the broader generalization is build. The purpose of this work is exploratory as it aims at discovering new patterns of migrants' interpersonal communication on politics.

The present analysis was not based on testing of any specific hypothesis, more it was aiming at providing information for further research in this field, therefore the study can be characterized as preliminary. Qualitative method is applied in this research, since it is aimed at preliminary data collection.

Following these considerations, semi-structured in-depth interview is employed since it (Boyce, C. and Neale, P. 2006, p. 3) "is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation". In other words, the chosen type of interview would not limit respondents' answers and the interviewer would get deeper insight to their political communication behaviour. Therefore, semi-structured in-depth interview fits the goals of this research.

3.2 Research questions

The aim of this study is to explore the patterns of communication about politics of Russian migrants in Finland. To find out if this phenomena exists at all and if yes then to what extent. The main question of this research is:

What influences political communication in interpersonal communication for Russian migrants?

This question aims at discovering the factors of political communication of Russian migrants in Finland and the nature of their influence. While this question itself is not presented at the

interviews, it is included here to serve as an umbrella for all the actual questions used in the research.

The main aspects of the researched factors of interpersonal communication on politics are the choice of channels which are preferred to receive news on political topics; countries of interest, and members of social circles with whom Russian migrants prefer to discuss politics.

In short, the goal is to discover what, how, with whom and how often interviewees discuss the focus topic. Further the questions which give more specific focus on the research topic are given:

1. **What types of political communication Russian migrants in Finland participate to?**
There are different classifications of interpersonal communication on politics. using two different approaches. Huckfeld et al. (2003) underlines importance of disagreement in conversation. Kim and Kim (2008, p. 51), as well, groups communication types in instrumental and dialogic deliberation, first one is a procedural tool, through which people negotiate and make decisions, and second one is needed to achieve mutual understanding and construct identities.

In addition, Scheufele (2000) categorizes it to conversation and talk, where first means conversation on some political topic, while second is such that leads to problem solving political act. Based on these approaches interviews will be analysed to decide which these types prevail in interpersonal communication of Russian migrants in Finland. More precisely, what place disagreement, as an important part of democratic process (Scheufele 2000, Huckfeld et al. 2003, Kim and Kim 2008) has in their interpersonal communication.

2. **What is the effect of different social circles as context on the type of political discussion?**

   This question is based on Lane's (1959) statement that there is high importance of social circles for influencing citizens' political choices. The aim of this question is to discover what is the effect of different social circles as context on the type of political discussion. In other words, if close social circles as family, friends, and work acquaintances are involved in political communication. If they are, how does this communication appear – for example,

does it consist of news exchange, discussing political events, or exchange of links to information sources etc.

3. **What are the main channels for receiving political information for Russian migrants in Finland?**

   This question can help to find out if Russian migrants in Finland are exposed to Finnish, Russian or international media channels, are they traditional (TV, newspaper) or web-services are preferred; do respondents use interpersonal communication for receiving political information. As well this question covers channels used for communication: mobile phone services, internet services (Skype, ICQ,) Social network services.

4. **To which country the political communication between Russian migrants refers to?**

   Source of information can show to big extent citizen's focus of interest. This question can show which country's or region's political life interests Russian migrants in Finland. Do they prefer to discuss international or local politics, Finnish or Russian political news, or are they interested in happenings in both countries?

5. **Do Russian migrants participate to politics? If yes, then how and in which country?**

   This question is not the main focus of the research. It is needed, though, to see whether interpersonal communication about politics correlates to political participation, such as voting.

Through combining these variables, a picture of migrants political communication aspects can be created.

3.3 Target Group

Due to the inherent width of the field of interpersonal communication, as well as the resources at hand the actual scope of the research was narrowed. As a consequence, the scope of this research is citizens' interpersonal communication and more specifically political interpersonal communication of Russian migrants living in Finland. The reasons for choosing the target group are the following:

first, it narrows the scope of the research to a manageable level, considering time and the other available resources; second, the author herself is a member of the Russian community in Finland, which also allows the use of their native language enabling a deeper understanding of the problem as well as building trust for the interviews.

Another reason is the lack of related research and considering the growing size of the Russian community in Finland this study will potentially contribute to understanding aspects of migrants' interpersonal communication about politics. Some factors which may influence interpersonal communication in the afore mentioned area are analysed as well.

3.4 Interview Design

The interviews were conducted in face-to-face discussions, the language of interview was Russian. Mainly interviews were recorded using a mp3 recorder, though some of them (due to unplanned discussion, when for instance interviewee was met during a trip) were summed up right after the discussion or typed-recorded during interview. The interviews were planed the way that they would not be limited and there would be time for comfortable discussion. Longest interview lasted more than three hours, the shortest – when interviewers were completely not interested in the subject – a few minutes.

The interview protocol was constructed the way that it would keep focus of discussion to the interpersonal aspects of political communication identified in the literature review. Further the research questions and their rationale were discussed. In addition, day-to-day immersion among Russian migrants helped me to understand better naturally occurring and nuanced aspects of political communication, even beyond the mode of interviewing.

With regard to research ethics, in order to keep anonymity, the respondents' names were changed. Respondents were interviewed and have given permission to cite their responses.

Among 12 interviewed respondents 10 reported using media, talking to family, friends, work colleagues on political topics. 3 participate in voting. In addition, there were 10 interlocutors who has denied interest in politics and interview did not proceed further than their reasoning why political issues are not interested to them. One of this interviews is quoted in the text as an example, but other are not resembled in the Appendix 1 or any where else in this work.

The interviews took from less than one minute – relevant for interviewers, who do not approach politics from any angle, up to two three hours with those who showed interest in political discussion. Interviews with respondents who showed some interest to political subjects lasted starting from 18 to 30 minutes or one hour. The longest interview lasted 3 hours but in that case the topic of the discussion went far from the topic of this research as it was taken during visiting a friend and so the occasion was not so formal.

The places for conducting the interviews were different. Some where taken in cafeterias, like the one with Jury which took 28 minutes. Other interviews were taken at respondent's place and up to three family members participated to it. Also, spontaneous interviews were taken at exhibitions, after church services, at the hall at school while waiting for children from their music course, in bus trips between Finland and Russia, which usually take up to 12 hours, in a hospital and at birthday celebration – practically everywhere, where there would be free time and a respondent or group of respondents willing to discuss the offered subject. Often the reason why interview took longer time was that respondents wanted to discuss specific political affairs interesting to them. With some interlocutors there were several meetings, where in informal settings some questions were specified.

The interviews first queried the respondents' approach towards politics in general, then narrowed to preferences in it in sense of areas of interest, sources of information and social circles with whom the respondent discusses political topics. Interviews, as it was mentioned, had in-depth semi-structured character. The interview's questionnaire is provided in Appendix 2.

In addition to recorded interviews there were some informal meetings, which, all together with recorded form of interaction adds up to 22 interviews. Diaries with field notes were made between 2008 and 2013, and used during work on this study.

The analysis of interviews was done the following way: first the interviews were listened, then a structure of hypothetically relevant aspects based also on literature review was made. Then the interviews were listened again and notes of the parts which are relevant for this research were made. Then for each respondent the transcription was analysed by referring to the research questions and sides notes were kept of other possible correlations and interpretations. Next the collected data are analysed according to the model build up in the literature review.

4 RESULTS

As it was reflected in the research, all aspects of communication are tightly interrelated. The analysis discovers not only the individual aspects but also their interrelation.

As it was expected, the respondents' approach to politics varies on a wide scale. Some expressed complete denial to discuss the subject, once hearing world "political". Almost half of the interviewees rejected discussing politics or replied that it is never a topic of their interest.

Others respondents were neutral, saying that political issues are just a part of everyday news flow and they do not specifically look for its details. Political topics do not interest them much but nevertheless they are willing to discuss it.

4.1 Main channels for receiving political information

In the interviews almost all interviewees refer to internet as their channel for receiving information. So, in accordance with nowadays technological tendencies almost all of them use internet, but the ways it is used wary quit much. For instance, here is Jury's description of his routine of receiving news:

"Newsru.com news is the portal what I check daily. Several times a day, main hot news. Three or four main news on the home page, sport, cultural news. Sometimes I open different Russian news: political, criminal, economical. From the ''Novaja Gazeta' paper – sometimes, very rarely check articles which friend of mine who works there, sends to me."

Other respondents reported similar approaches towards internet as a main source of news. For Julia in Finland the main source of information is the internet. Oleg as well is regularly reading articles in the internet, to follow current affairs: *"to be in contexts on what is going on in the world"*.

Receiving news form the internet is not limited by only the sources used by mass media, like news or analytical portals. It also includes use of sources for interpersonal communication like e-mails and on-line communication services such as Skype, or social community networks like Facebook or popular Russian social networks Vkontakte and Odnoklasniki. For instance Nastja's way of receiving political information was: *"I read news only from internet, from Russian news portals on Yandex.ru or sometimes check international news portals"*.

Nevertheless social networks like Facebook or Vkontakte as a source of information about politics were mentioned by interviewees only twice, and as a link to blog or a news portal. But internet news portals were mentioned by each respondent who reported to be interested in political news. Also internet services were mentioned as source of TV programs, for instance Dmitri follows Russian political news and programs on TV through one of web pages.

Traditional media like TV, radio and newspapers are used less than internet sources by those respondents who active in their political approach. TV is a second most used source of information after internet especially for those respondents who are mostly neutral towards politics. Often reason for not watching TV in Finland is luck of language knowledge or prevalence of internet as alternative source of information. Julia does not watch TV in Finland since she does not understand Finnish enough, though she daily watches news on central TV channels when she is in Russia (ORT, NTV and RTR). For Jury watching TV as well as checking news on internet is a daily program:

> *"On TV we watch Finnish news – since we don't have any satellite. Switching from news to news. What is happening in the country."*

Another respondent, Victoria, with Finnish spouse specified that Finnish television is the main and daily source for receiving information, and Russian media sources are used to compare media's view points in special occasions.

Oleg uses TV almost as much as internet for following everyday happenings in Russia, Finland and other countries. His TV has only Russian channels like NTV, TNT, 1ˢᵗ channel, 5ᵗʰ channel: *"I don't have a system, if news have ended on this channel, I am clicking further",* there he is interested mainly in news and analytical programs, like *"K barjeru"* (To the Barrier) once in a few weeks. TV channel "Spas" with analytical program "Five on economics" (highest grade in Russian school). Discussion on international issues, almost daily.

Radio and printed newspapers are used way less than the first two mentioned channels. There was only one respondent who is regularly listening to the radio programs, and that is the recorded programs which can be listened from radio channels' websites. The programs she is listening to are analytical, broadcast in Russian language and cover Russian and international political, cultural and economical news.

There were less interviewed respondents who read printed newspapers than those who read their printed versions. But some informers prefer printed newspapers, for example, Oleg said about Finnish newspapers that: "*I don't know Finnish that well, but when there is a need I am with a great effort reading something… trying to catch key words."* About Russian printed newspapers he said that: *"I read Argumenty I Fakty (Arguments and Facts), when there is possibility to bring them [from Russia]."* He prefers to read printed newspapers which his friends and relatives bring for him from trips to Russia. Dimitri points out that he prefers printed newspapers to their internet versions:

> *"I tried to read Aamulehti from its web-page, but it did not go well. It should be like this* [shows an open newspaper], *so that I can read it comfortably. For me newspaper should be printed."*

But another respondent, Tatiana, shows the tendency which have noted other interviewees, where printed newspapers are considered outdated:

> *"When I lived in Holand, about ten years ago, I used to read printed newspapers, but not any more. I can hardly imagine, that there are still people who read printed newspapers."*

Otherwise respondents read newspapers mainly from news headlines collections in internet. So interest to newspapers is not diminishing, but rather changing its vector towards new sources of information. For example, Kristina:

"I am reading news from Russian news portals, like Rambler or Yandex, where they have the news headlines from different newspapers, uploading every now and then, as something happens. Foreign news I am reading too, in English."

Respondents as well read Finnish newspapers through internet, for example, Jury says:

"I check sometimes Aamulehti – and comments on the article down at the page. In Aamulehti I check the news inside the country – Finnish news, Pirkanmaa section. It is interesting for me what is going on in country and in the region."

Another interviewee, Julia, who does not know Finnish language, is reading news about Finland from English versions of Finnish media sources: *"sometimes I check Helsinkin Sanomat web page in English to compare view points, but they are not translating everything, only what they consider interesting."*

Darja as well is reading Finnish newspapers, at least ones a week, but mainly those are advertising newspapers like Tamperelainen, and Aamulehti, which is more analytical, she reads one a month from internet or at work its printed version. She prefers to read news about Russia from Finnish media sources, mainly newspapers: *"news about Russia I read in Aamulehti. If something happens they write about it."* One of the reasons for neglecting Russian media sources is the intention to learn Finnish language better.

To sum up, TV as a source of information on politics as well as internet are approximately equally used by informers and are often combined. Internet sources allow more freedom in the choice of information, and often after hearing news on TV respondents reported that they went to further explore the topic in internet, if the news was interesting for them. Though, TV can be as well the only source of information when it works as a background of everyday routine and other sources of information are not used.

Printed newspapers, as well as newspapers provided through internet are subject of interest of those respondents, who are active in their search of information. Both of newspaper types are used by respondents, but there are more of those who prefer web versions as they are easier to reach. Often use of newspapers come together with search in world wide web. With whom respondents talk about politics is discussed further.

4.2 How the choice of sources is related to other aspects?

Interpersonal or group discussions at work take place often when induced by some happenings in the political arena, like elections as for example in Julia's case: *"We discuss sometimes at work, when something happens, but only between Russians."* Nikolai has noticed that once at work his Finnish colleague has asked his opinion about happenings in Russia, but he denied to give any opinions, because: *"I was not present there, how do I know, if it is true, what they are saying* [refers to mass media]." His reply was as well repeated by some other respondents who denied any interest to politics, and was given as a reason of neglecting political issues. This shows low trust to information provided by mass media in general and about political issues explicitly.

There was only one respondent, Olga, who not only actively reads and listens to both Russian and international news, using internet sources, radio and TV in Russian and English languages, but as well had experience of participating to on-line discussions.

Discussion with family members for some respondents is the main source of information, for instance, Inga said: *"I don't read news at all, if there is something, I would ask it from my husband, he knows all these things."* For another respondent, Kristina, her spouse is the trusted source of information, though she reads international news herself daily, issues concerning Finland she prefers to ask her spouse's opinion, as well they discuss international news together.

For Nastya, who does not read news on the regular basis, her husband is the main source of information also:

"I just don't bother reading news, for several reasons. He is reading news and analytical journals from different sources, and I can get core information just by asking him. It is easier, faster, more peaceful, because reading news makes me nervous, and it is another a reason to talk to each other."

For Catherine her spouse is as well a trusted source of information about Finland and European news: *"He can see the situation differently from how they see it."* It was mentioned by other respondents as well, that interpretation of the same event by native citizens and migrants might be different and that sometimes they need to get the viewpoint of local citizens on some event, to understand it better.

Tatiana queries her friends when she wants to check how true is the information given in the media, using Skype. As well Jury and Nastja ask their relatives about happenings in Russia, to find balance between media news and peoples' experience from inside the country.

Programs of political parties and candidates is another type of political advertising which apprise before elections. For Nadezda it is the only source of information about politics which she reads:

"I never read Russian news, though I have Russian citizenship. Finnish news – not much, at least I am not interested in political news. I thought that since I have a right to vote in Finland I should do it, so I can participate in life of the country. In Finland I always vote, and read the programs before voting."

Also the upcoming municipal elections is a topic of interest for some other informers. For instance, Daria pays attention to the political advertising before elections:

"About elections I was reading about the candidates, representatives of the parties. Who is who.   I am planing to vote. As well I was reading newspaper from the Russian club [in Finland] about one of the candidates, and I liked the way he was talking about immigrants."

During interviews in Russian, Daria used part of the words in Finnish, like: ehdokkaat (candidates) and kuntavaalit (municipal elections). Names of the Finnish parties she knows were as well given in Finnish language. Also, some other respondents as well were using names of Finnish parties in Finnish language.

Further, trust to the members of close social circle is higher than to mass media sources. For instance, Tatiana reported that she double checks the news about happenings in Russia with her friends living there:

> *"I am reading news in English, for example, and then either going to ask my friends through Skype – what is going on, or going to read comments of this persons* [Akunin are Pochti novaja gorgetka - known political analyst: writer and journalist].*"*

Julia also says:*"I like comparing news, it is interesting"* - she means comparing Russian online information sources and international ones, but receiving news and analysing them for herself is enough.

As it was noted before, some of the interviewees do not want to spend their time with retrieving news from different sources available to them, but they rather ask their spouse and so get a summary of the latest affairs. Interestingly some interviewees who read Russian news actively themselves reported that about international or Finnish news they would rather ask their spouse, for example Kristina said:*"I am not so good at international affairs so I rather ask my husband, he reads this things more and understands them better."* This is actual especially for the families where spouses belong to different nationalities.

This can be explained by the fact that interviewees understand Russian news because they have more background. Their choice of source is related as well to their understanding and insider knowledge of the topic, so in areas, which respondents do not know that well themselves they would look for a source which gives not only row facts, but also insight and commentary.

Also some the respondents like Julia, Jury and Tatiana said that they like to check different sources to get different points of view on the same issue, which helps them to eliminate one-sided opinions.

To sum up, by analysing the interviews it can be concluded that the main channels for receiving political information for active respondents are internet sources. TV news and programs are the second most used source of information. Printed and online magazines and newspapers are as well

used by active respondents. Respondents often refer to their relatives as a source of political information instead of using media sources or to get explanation or proof of the information given in the media. That mostly happens when either relative is living in the country which political situation is the topic of interest or when his/her belonging to certain nationality can give better explanation of the situation or happenings.

In multicultural families where both spouses are interested in politics of their own country, often discuss these issues with each other, which allows them to follow political life of both countries and as well gives another topic for discussion between each other, which they as well find important. Next, the social circles in which political topics arise are discussed.

4.3 With whom politic is discussed? Discussion with spouse, parents and friends.

This chapter considers respondents discussions on politics within their family, with spouses and parents and with their friends. Discussion about politics in the interviewed group of respondents mainly happens within the family. For example, Jury says, that they while discussing with parents on Skype, they can ask each other about actual political matters, but more often discussion happens with his wife:

> *"Lately home we discussed economical situation in Finland, lay-offs. Discussing if there are some interesting articles we have read, as we are reading different news portals."*

Nastya says as well that they discuss political questions mainly with her husband, as well as other interviewees, who say that political matters, if they are discussed, then they mostly discussed home with spouse. Conversation about political issues with grandparents living in Russia she is trying to avoid, because:

> *"They believe so much in to a play which is plaid for them from TV, mass media in Russia, that it is almost impossible to explain them what is wrong. So I try not to talk with them about it. Why should I? It would only disappoint them, and would change nothing."*

Discussion with the closer generation, parents is easier for respondents, and concerns both Russian and European political issues, news and deeper discussions on the subject. For example, Olesja commented on communication in their family about political news: *"we can compare how some happenings are presented in Finnish and Russian media, how election campaigns are organized."* This might mean increased flexibility of the second generation of migrants.

Discussion with friends, surprisingly does not concern political matters very often. There were only few respondents who reported that they regularly - at least once a month - meet with group of friends to talk about politics. For instance, Victor, who discusses politics with his Russian friends: *"we talk about politics, history. Analysing. It is interesting."*

Oleg also discusses political happenings with his friends: *"what has happened, and what can be the future… opportunity to influence is very illusive, and a quite masochist thing to do…"* Communication for him occurs as well through e-mail or Skype, with friends a few times a month, and through personal meetings in Russia, mainly in Saint Petersburg, which does not happen more than a few times a year. He as well talks with Russian friends in Finland about elections, especially the local one, because there is possibility to vote, and because they discuss parties with candidates, who participate to the elections.

Jury about discussing political news home with his wife: *"To get information... About discussing or expressing displease over authorities I am a bit passive in that respect… I am not interested in it."* Talking to parents or friends living in Russia often covers reviewing media news and gossips:

> *"It is not that bad in Russia and in Finland it can be different. Because people sometimes have this kind of impression that in a foreign country everything is ideal."*

As it was mentioned earlier, Julia prefers not to discuss politics because of lack of interlocutors, as she explains it. Nevertheless, for her and another respondent, discussion on politics with Finnish spouse turned to be a base for a conflict, so one of the families decided to stop discussing politics at all:

"Because recently this turns into aggressive form, we keep quiet lately. Even if I will know that he is not saying truth, any way, I would not show and will protect Russia any way. My character is such that I start take offence… I understand, that if not everything but a big part of the information given here is truth, but… it hurts, I have grown up there.."

Discussions home for couples with Finnish – Russian nationality often brings up difficult questions which sometimes makes the communication process tense. One can see how the notion of being   a Russian or Finnish patriot and augmented by the media as well, reflects in family lives. From another hand, these discussions help to bring up difficult questions and, through conversation, find mutual understanding, which is beneficial for both participants.

Also, to some of the couples with different nationalities discussing politics of the countries they belong to might be an actual reason to communicate, as in Tatiana's family: *"If I am home then the only reason for me to talk about politics would be – like who won elections in France, or in Russia."*

To sum up, conversations which happen among respondents in the family and with friends have wide range of emotional and informational aspects. In a family respondents exchange received information about politics, share opinions, conclusions and also raise uncomfortable questions, look for understanding of on-going political processes and ask their spouses as a trusted source of information.

4.4 Discussions at work

Discussion at work happens mainly with Russian co-workers. Respondent who works in international environment, Jury, specified that people try to avoid discussion on sensitive questions *"if we talk about it, then casually, with irony. Sometimes we can talk about soviet times, history. How they see what was happening at those times*."

Group of Russian people working for many years in the same international company in Finland discusses political happenings but only among each other, at launch or coffee breaks, and for conversation to happen there should be some happening in politics to trigger the communication.

According to Mutz and Mondak (2006, p. 140) work is the most probable place where different opinions meet, but the results of this research show that even though political topics can be raised at working place, migrants say that they try to avoid ideas that can lead to confrontation. Instead, this confronting ideas are more probable to be raised in a family discussions.

4.5 Types of interpersonal communication on politics

When analysing respondents communication based on Schudson's (1997) approach, it is apparent then talk, as an uncomfortable situation where confronting ideas meet, happens mainly in a family, between spouses or relatives - no one has mentioned that opposing ideas would be raised at work. Julia, Viktoria and Kristina who have Finnish spouses have pointed out that discussions home about Finnish or Russian political affairs can be tense sometimes. On the other hand, conversation, as a comfortable situation, where similar ideas are reinforced, happens casually, between friends, at home, and at work place among Russian and Finnish co-workers. According to Huckfeldt et al. (2003), who has pointed out importance of ability of citizens to disagree, the fact of presence of raising opposing questions in respondents interpersonal communication about politics is a good sign in terms of healthy democratic processes.

The analysis of respondents' communication based on distinction of deliberation given by Kim and Kim (2008) on two levels exposes that between instrumental deliberation and dialogic deliberation, informers participate to dialogic deliberation mainly, as nobody has reported that their dialogues would result in any civic activity, like signing petitions, etc; or in any other problem-solving activity. The only activity which respondents report, was voting.

As a summary of choice of peers and type of communication, the widest range of discussions happens in a family, since there respondents are not afraid to raise those questions which they would hesitate to ask from friends or work colleagues. At the working place respondents are most careful in their questions and discussions. With friends conversation happen in an open way.

4.6 The country of interest

Respondents' countries of interest vary a lot. There are informers whose interest concerns only Russian news, as well there are those who is interested first place Finnish and international politics, when Russian politics is a minor interest.

In this focus area a pattern was found, which shows that respondents with limited social circle, without work and knowledge of Finnish language tend to either ignore political life of any country or to check only Russian news. Often respondents show very high level of knowledge in Russian political situation (as well as other news related to the country) as they follow TV and often radio news reports several times a day. They often read Russian newspapers from internet web-sites too.

For example, respondent from one interviewed migrant family is actively reading on-line news only from Russian on-line sources. Vera explained her ignorance of Finnish and international news with lack of language knowledge and noticeable happenings in the country (Finland).

Another tendency, which was noticed is that respondents, who have knowledge of Finnish and (or) English language, and are working, studying or actively searching for work or studying possibilities, and therefore have a wider social network, are more interested in life of the country they are currently living in, as well as in international news.

Respondent with life experience in different countries tend to monitor political news on those countries where they used to live. For example, Tatiana checks Chinese, Great Britain's as well as Finnish and Russian political news, more specifically as she used to live for several years in those countries. Nevertheless she is interested in international news as well.

For a young Russian couple with fluent knowledge of Finnish language discussion about political news and actual political issues happens almost every day, as Jury tells:

> *"Lately home we discussed economical situation in Finland, lay-offs. Discussing if there are some interesting articles we have read, as we are reading different news portals."*

Nevertheless these habits wary from family to family, and another young Russian couple as well with fluent knowledge of Finnish language prefers to discuss and watches mainly Russian news on TV, and sometimes check Finnish news.

All in all, the historical background of foreign affairs of the countries, to which the spouses belong, also plays a role in the topic of choice of communication. For instance, Russian-French couple tends to discuss political news and history of both countries at least as much as their country of residence.

4.7 Correlation between voting habits and interpersonal communication on politics

The will to vote in itself does not correlate with the interest in political arena as much as the political knowledge, for example, Elena says:

> *"I am in principle not going to vote, because one should know for whom he is voting, and since we don't know the language it does not make sense… We understand language on a basic level, and even if we will try to watch candidates' speeches, it will be too difficult for us."*

This respondent follows happenings on Russian politics, but is not interested in Finnish affairs. Because of lack of language knowledge voting is not considered by part of the respondents in Finland. As for voting in Russian elections, almost half of the respondents say that they would vote if it would not have to travel to Helsinki in order to do that, since the trip requires some time and money to be spend on it.

Some of the respondents, who are up to date on political news, say that they never vote, as they do not see any impact of this on political life.

Here is Darija's feedback on elections:

> *About elections I was reading about ehdokkaat [candidates], representatives of the parties. Who is who. I am planing to vote. [when respondent has chosen to say words in Finnish they were kept in Finnish without translation] Newspaper from Russian club about one ehdokkaat and I liked his approach. As well I read cards from other candidates what they are offering. Kuntavaalit [municipal election]. Political, cultural news about Tampere region in Finnish language."*

Likewise Nadja, who does not follow political news or events in general, with fluent Finnish language skills, during the Finnish election campaign checks the leaflets and votes based on that information, without discussing candidates or parties with anybody, as she does not see it necessary. Therefore discussion or getting information regularly are not positively correlated with voting behaviour.

One of the respondents, Ruslan, who denied any interest in politics, nevertheless, once participated to the local elections as a candidate:

> *"Friends asked me, as there were some quota for foreigners or for Russians which should have been presented among candidates, so I went, just to help them. I thought, I would have to sign a few papers, but it has turned into a lot of running to different offices. I would not want to do this ever again."*

About voting in Russian elections, Tatiana, who follows political news of both countries as well as international events though not in depth, but in a flow with other news, commented on presidental elections in Russia:

> *"I even haven't thought about it, and only when the presidential elections were over I realized that I could have voted. Though, if I would have the right, I would for sure vote in Finland."*

Other respondents also said that they do not participate to elections in Russia, but the reasons for not taking part in elections are different: for some it is absence of interest and for others it is the big distance, as they would have to travel either all the way to Russia or to Helsinki. To conclude, the will to take political actions (such as voting) does not always come together with everyday interest in political life.

5 DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to find out the main patterns in influences on interpersonal communication about politics among Russian migrants in Finland. The main results of the research are provided below. Through combining variables discussed above, the types of migrants' political communication can be described. The discussion flows according to the research questions.

There are three main channels for receiving political information for Russian migrants in Finland: internet, television and social circles.

According to the results of this research discussion about politics happens mainly home or at work. As it was mentioned in the literature review, Mutz and Mondak (2006) notice that politics is most likely to be discussed at work and also this is the place where opposing opinions meet. Discussions, concerning political issues occur at work, as among Russian co-workers as well as among Russian and Finnish colleagues. Sometimes conversation happens when initialized by events regarding Finnish-Russian relations, particularly when their interpretation can be different. But discussions do not narrow only to the topics of Finnish-Russian relations, any bigger happening on the local or international political arena can motivate the dialogue between colleagues.

In addition, it was mentioned earlier, confronting ideas are more likely to be raised among family members at home, when at working place these questions co-workers prefer to avoid. This corresponds as well with Bishin and Klofstad (2009, p. 2) research, which implies that though migrants, as native citizens are likely to participate to discussions about politics, while migrants are as likely as native born citizens to engage in political discussions, it is less probable that they would "share politically-relevant information during such conversations".

A part of respondents is getting information about politics mainly through interpersonal communication, especially within the family, one of the spouses is more active in gathering information (through mass media), and the other one prefers asking him/her about political issues.

For Russian-Finnish couples media coverage of political news is a subject of disagreement and even verbal conflict, so that two respondents referred to this kind of personal experience and concluded

that they have chosen to avoid talking about politics. This corresponds with the findings of Huckfeldt et al. (2003, p. 5), where dissent is understood as important for democratic deliberation, but uncomfortable for its participants situation. Kim and Kim (2008) and Schudson (1997) as well point out the inconvenience of disagreements for citizens encountered in to this type of conversation.

The discussion of sensitive topics especially regarding the country of origin might result in arguing against objective facts just to protect something they are emotionally attached to. This was reported to occur only in Finnish-Russian families, but not in other couples with different nationalities, for example, French-Russian. The contemporary relations between migrant sending (Russia) and receiving (Finland) countries influence these discussions. As with any neighbouring countries the complex history of Finnish-Russian relations get re-activated as argument in talks about present affairs.

Inside the same family there may be different people belonging to different generations as it was the case of mother and daughter who moved to Finland and the daughter integrated better into the society so they have different views and interpretations of the same events, and discussions on topics with disagreement helps to transfer different knowledge and understanding between generations.

For some respondents luck of knowledge of Finnish language or its low level is considered as a barrier to access Finnish news at all event though there is a number of different Finnish sources providing news in Russian: YLE provides news on Russian language on radio, TV and same news are available on their web-portal during one month, there is as well newspaper Spectr: *www.spektr.net/* which provides news about Finland in Russian language. This corresponds with Esser's (2006) research review, where he points out both the benefits and the difficulties of linguistic diversity for society. However, only one of the respondents mentioned that she is using Finnish news portal in Russian. Though one should bear in mind that this result can be due to low amount of respondents interviewed, results show that language knowledge affect the choice of communication channels used.

So, the language barrier can be a pretext to explain lack of interest in Finnish political news. There have been also comments comparing political life in Finland and Russia and saying that the former is less spectacular and virtually still, which makes it less attractive. The question is whether politics is indeed less dynamic or is it a perception just because of the respondents' limited linguistic skills and different cultural ability to consume local politics. To sum up, absence or low language knowledge of a new country of residence, obviously diminish potential diversity of social interaction and interpersonal communication about political issues as well.

Furthermore, there seems to be a connection between level of education and breadth of political interest, which corresponds with previous research (Hillygus, 2005, Price and Zaller, 1993, etc.). Based on the interviews it appears that people with higher education generally tend to be more interested in a wider scope of political topics as well as sources of information like analytical programs and journals. Specifically more educated respondents, although not all of them, expressed more attention to international politics and Finnish politics. They, as well, tend to take news critically and compare them from different sources.

Most respondents with higher education, are mostly critical towards the news regardless whether they are local Finnish, Russian or international. Therefore, to the extent to which their language knowledge allow them they are trying to do the news comparison from different media sources and to discuss it with relatives or friends. Often in this case personal opinion outweighs impressions conducted by media. But, on the other hand, if personal knowledge (regular reading of different information sources) is valuable, and the given person is sure of his opinion, then discussion meets more reasoning.

There are people who actively develop their knowledge and information based on what they get from sources specialized in politics and they are willing to exchange their own opinion with others and receive different perspective. On the opposite there are those who passively consume political news as part of their daily consumption of media and they do not actively pursue getting more inept knowledge about current political affairs.

There seems to be a correlation between the level of integration to the local society and the focus of interest in terms of Russian versus Finnish political affairs. For instance, younger migrants grow up in Finland, speak better Finnish as they are more involved in local society and find it easier to follow Finnish politics. This might mean increased flexibility of the second generation of migrants. As opposed to older persons who often lack the necessary language skills and therefore the possibility or the strong motivation to follow Finnish political affairs.

So, those migrants, who do not have permanent or part time work, and do not have hope to get integrated into society due to their age and lack of language knowledge, who have moved to Finland with grown up children or children of teenage often prefer to get information concerning happenings in Russia and preferably from Russian media sources.

It was noticed, that those respondents, whose interest mainly concerns country of origin and Finnish language skills are not enough for fluent conversation, live far from big cities in small towns or villages. Therefore they have less possibilities to participate to different social activities and have less social contacts, which corresponds with Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009) research on limited migrants incorporation into politics due to their isolated location.

Nevertheless, there are also migrant citizens who are well informed and strive to be active even at an older age. They want to keep learning about society and be updated with happenings in it. For some, Aamulehti as a major daily newspaper is the source of information, they would read it even if they have to use a dictionary many times to get through an article. Newspaper, as a source of information, regardless of whether it is accessed in printed or in electronic format from internet, are used by those respondents, who are active and critical in their approach towards information about politics. There is research (Sotirovic and McLeod, 2001, p. 287) showing that reading public affairs from newspaper as well as controversial discussions encourage political participation. At the same time, television entertainment, hinders it (idem, p. 287) hinders political participation. Interestingly the results of the interviews in the current research indicate the opposite: people with higher interest in politics tend to read newspaper more but they do not participate in politics. Those who watch a lot of TV programs a lot tend to vote in elections more. Nevertheless this conclusion is not supported by a sufficient number of responses as the research was qualitative and so should be

received with reservation. Indeed, the current research provides controversial results on interpersonal communication on politics and active approach towards political news and political participation, which is discussed in more detail further.

Lazarsfeld et al. (1968, p. xxxii) point out the importance of group influence on citizens' opinion and their identity building: one prefers to escape propaganda, as it influences on his attitude. At the same time personal contacts reinforce ideas shared within one's social group. Considering this idea, it is apparent, that respondents presented polarized approaches towards propaganda. There were those, who, according to Lazarsfeld et al.'s implication, preferred to escape any media sources and to get information from persons of their close social circle (mainly from spouse and friends - work colleagues were asked rarely). Others, contrarily, preferred to gather all information and form an opinion themselves and choose rarely or never to discuss it with others.

For those respondents, who are active in their approach towards politics, internet is the main source of receiving information, but not for participating or initiating communication about politics. Southwell and Yzer (2009 p. 6) implies that internet cannot replace traditional ways of communication, but rather enriches them: "The internet is likely to extend, not diminish, the role of talk between people." With regard to talk about politics, at least in case of this research, there is not enough evidence to support this idea: the analysis shows that internet enriches access to communication and different sources of information, but not necessarily the content of communication. So, situation seems to be different with immigrants, with the internet appearing to be a more powerful source of information among them, as it provides easier access to the media sources as of country of origin, as to a new country of residence.

Internet, indeed, increases information consumption, but its accessibility does not always imply that its users would start active communication. Many of informers use the internet as a source of information which provides easy access to news agencies, journals, TV programs. Some go to discussion forums to read them but only one respondent reported writing to the forum and after very negative feedback she decided never to repeat the experience.

The internet is not used only for mass communication, but also as a substitute for direct interpersonal communication as it happens with Skype, which allows for audio and visual stream. This bridges communication for the people who are in Finland and their friends and relatives from Russia.

One of the research questions is based on the findings of Schudson (1997) and Huckfeldt et al. (2003), which consider talk as an unpleasant situation which is a place for meeting of confronting ideas, which, in turn, has influence on political attitudes and views. Conversely, conversation is a place where similar ideas are enhanced.

There are no direct findings on the distinction between political talk and conversation, as the study did not include recordings of dialogues carried out by respondents with their family, friends or work colleagues. However, they referred to disagreements and conflicts emerging in certain situations.

During the interviews respondents mostly mentioned the first type: conversation. No one has mentioned any situations where opposing opinions would be raised while discussing political issues with friends or at work. In this research informers did not say anything about confronting moments at work, neither those who discuss political issues only with Russian co-workers, nor those who discusses it with Finnish co-workers. Especially at work, as it was specified by some respondents, sensitive topics were carefully avoided. It is worth noting, as well, that event though some respondents prefer to follow political news and analyse them, not all of them like to discuss the received information, as they see no reason to do so.

Coming back to the previous deliberation, discussion touching sensitive questions, called according to Schudson (1997) and Huckfeldt et al. (2003) "political talk", where confronting ideas meet, happens mostly in the family. This might be because trust in the family is higher and people are not afraid to raise sensitive questions at home. Situations of "political talk" happen between different generations and between spouses of different nationalities.

Further, since Huckfeldt et al. (2003, p. 1) argue that the healthy functioning of a democratic process to a big extend is up to the citizens' ability to disagree and that between total agreement and

verbal conflict there is room for polite disagreement, (partial disagreement, mild disagreement) which is needed in exchanging ideas and information in general. Results of this research show that talk with total disagreement does not occur within all social circles of migrants but happens only in the closest one. Ultimately this means that interpersonal communication of respondents is not evenly open in different social circumstances and environment.

Factors from the SES model which was explained by Bradly at al. (1995), i.e. socio-economic status: education, income and occupation - most probably because of the small amount of interviewed respondents - did not have positive correlation with the migrants political participation, although the level of income was not asked from respondents as it was not appropriate for the chosen method of interview.

Also there was not found a positive correlation between respondent's willingness to talk about politics and their political participation, which supports Bishin and Klofstad (2009) assumption, that migrants communication on politics does not have positive correlation with their political participation. Conversely, there was a sign of slight negative correlation in that respect.

For instance, some respondents, who talk, follow, understand politics, never try to participate to it, even in voting. Politics for them is like a 'parallel world' with which they never try to meet but always follow its changes. On the other side of the scale there are some respondents who never initiate talk about political topics, but during time of elections try to find information about candidates or parties and make their choice.

6 SUMMARY

Finland resident Russian migrants' communication about politics vary widely between individuals, since this social group is very uneven in its age, education and life experience. Their focus of interest also depends on personal choices and is limited by language knowledge.

Also the results of the interviews concerning migrants' mass media use indicate a selection of habits, where, internet and TV are the main sources of information. Some respondents keep their focus of interest to Russian media only, which is often linked with lack of language knowledge. Those informers, who have good linguistic skills in Finnish language and are interested in politics, reported being interested in both countries.

Modern consumer media and peer-to-peer communication are interrelated via the internet: social websites serves both. Utilizing internet as a way of sharing news with a wider peer base (one-to-many) was not preferred by any of the respondents. It was apparent, that interviewees often trust closer personal relationships sources more than general media sources, or at least use them to double check and discuss information, received from mass media.

In the research there was no evidence that extended use of internet would imply using the same channel for active deliberation, in spite of services which make possible cheap foreign calls to family and friends abroad.

Often informers were not aware of the fact that there is a number of Finnish media sources which release news in Russian language. Some respondents who are not interested in news about Finland explained it by lack of Finnish language knowledge and absence of TV news in Russian (at the time of that interview, YLE has not started yet broadcasting news on TV in Russian language). All in all, the use of media sources depends on language knowledge and personal interest in political issues. Further, respondents with higher education tend to have wider scope of interest towards political news – both local to international.

In reflection to the findings of Huckfeldt et al. (2003) on the place of disagreement, results show that the most open interpersonal communication about politics, with raising and discussing opposing opinions, happens within close social circles such as family and friends. Indeed, it was found that in outer social circles disagreement is usually avoided in discussions. This shows difference with interpersonal communication of non-migrant citizens, which, according to Mutz and Mondak (2006), happens mostly at the working place.

In summary, 3 main types of respondents can be identified dependent on their interest towards politics:

- Active. Most active have aspiration to compare different sources of information, interest in politics of both Finland and Russia, as well as International and local political issues. Those, whose interest in political issues is high, can be divided to two further groups: those, who actually like to discuss politics with peers; and those, who are actively looking for political news but they are not that open to discussions and consider this knowledge only for their personal development. Moreover, willingness to compare different sources of information often correlate with higher education.

- Idle. Those, who would listen about political issues in the general daily news flow but would not try to find information about political topics themselves. They would listen to political discussion and even might slightly participate to it but would not initiate it themselves.

- Blocking. Mentioning politics brings negative emotions to members of this group. They generally have a sceptic approach towards political affairs. They would not participate to political discussions and would try to avoid them. There was no visible correlation between political activity or communication and education, age or profession. Nevertheless due to the qualitative nature of the research this latter finding is not fully proved.

Categorisation based on the groups identified above are approximate, and people might move from one activity level to another dependent on the type of news happening: hard news they can personally relate to, can activate those, who are usually neutral towards politics.

The framework built on the base of the literature review seems to be suitable to discover the aspects of immigrants communication on politics. Considering the elements of the framework there were no additional issues raised by the respondents. However, there was a new dimension added to this framework by the analysis of the interviews: the overall relation of the respondents to politics and communication about politics.

Beside the above, the study provides some insight into an important topic that was not in the primary focus: how the level of interest in politics might correlate with political participation such as voting.

6.1 Limitations and further research

Although this research on Russian migrants communication about politics has reached its goal there were some unavoidable limitations due to the methodology used. Also, it raises new questions to which further researchers could address to.

First, this study has shown only some patterns in migrants approach towards politics, due to several reasons: the interviewed group of respondents was small and could not represent the whole variety of Russian migrants in Finland. Due to the limited resources of the research, informers were mainly from urban arias. Study, therefore, could bring more clarified results if respondents would be researched by different social groups as well: education, age, sex, occupation, geographical (urban or rural), etc.

Second, even though relations between interpersonal communication and political knowledge together with social skills and communication competence were discussed in the theoretical part of the study, they are not reflected in results, as the research did not provide enough scope to cover them. Further research could be extended in this direction.

Third, migrants' communication about politics itself was not researched or observed (apart from cases when respondents initiated discussion on political subjects with interviewer). Rather it was

based on self-reported information which did not provide evidence of migrants actual communication, as direct observation would. So, the research frame, and its resources did not allow to organize observation on the process of the political communication itself: this could be the goal of a further research in this field, for example, through focus-group discussion.

Fourth, since this research was conducted by one researcher, some level of subjectivity might have occurred. Also, since qualitative research method was employed, the results cannot be generalized to the whole group of Russian migrants in Finland, since the research group was not statistically representative.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview questions were based on the Scheufele (2000 pp. 739-740) questionnaire.

<p align="center">**Questionnaire**</p>

Informational sources:

Newspaper & Magazine Use
Exposure: Do you read newspapers, magazines?
Could you please name them?
Which topics interest you the most?
Do you discuss them? (where, with whom, about what, for how long and how often.)

Supporting questions:

> *News:*
> *a. International affairs?*
> *b. National government and politics?*
> *c. News about politics, economy, and social issues?*
> *d. Editorials and opinion columns about local affairs?*

How often do you read them? (Supporting questions – ones a month, every day?)
Why?

Television Use:
Do you watch TV?
Could you please name the channels?
Could you please name your favorite programs?
Which topics interest you the most? *(see the supporting questions)*

How often do you watch them? *(supporting questions – ones a month,… every day?)*
Do you discuss them? *(With whom, etc.)*

Political Talk

Outside of Family:
Do you discuss political issues?
With whom do you discuss politics?
Supporting questions: Your friends?
Colleagues at work?
Acquaintances?

How often do you talk to them about politics?

Politics of which country/countries you discuss?

Within Family:
Do you discuss politics at home?
Could you please tell how often you talk to members of your family about that?
About which issues and topics?
In which form? (discussions, debates)
How often do you talk about politics?
(please see the *supporting questions*)

Web-services
Do you use internet services to find news, information on events /political issues?
Could you please name them? (News sites, forums)
Do you communicate with anybody through internet about political issues?
Have you met them in internet?
Do you participate to any forums?
How much time you spend visiting those web services?
How often you use them?

Supporting questions (issues and topics)
a. National issues and politics?
b. What about local issues and politics?
c. And what about issues concerning your neighbourhood?

Political Participation:
Would you please tell me if in the past two years you have: (civil activity)
a. attended a neighbourhood meeting?
b. Written a letter to the local editor or called in to a local radio station?
c. Circulated a petition for a local candidate or issue?
d. Voted for a locally elected official?
e. Worked for a political campaign locally?
f. Contacted a local public official?

Social background
Age
Education
Employment
Country of origin

Note: Questions order is approximate, they were asked with an interview 'flow'. question 'Why?' was asked if it was appropriate in the interview situation.

APPENDIX 2

Summary of interviews

Field of interest	Information sources	Frequency	Language knowledge
(Kristina) Mainly Russian politics, International and Finnish as well.	Russian news portals: Yandex and Rumbler and newspapers to which web-site there is link in the news line, if the news is interesting, discussions with the spouse.	Almost every day (check)	English, Russian, Finnish poor
(Viktoria) Following happenings in both countries, comparing Finnish and Russian news content.	Finnish news on TV and Russian informational sources in internet for comparing news, discussions with the spouse and parents.	Finnish news on TV – always, Russian news - when something happens.	Finnish Russian
(Vera) Russian news, very rarely Finnish news.	Russian TV channels, Russian internet information sources: Rambler, newspapers. Daughter and her Finnish husband.	Russian news on Russian TV channels, daily. Internet	Russian
(Jury) Finnish, Foreign and Russian politics, local news in Tampere region	Local newspapers, international internet news portals, Russian internet portals, analytical articles (specify) discussions with the spouse.	Almost every day	English, Finnish, Russian, Spanish
(Julia) Russian and International	Russian and International informational sources on internet: Rambler.ru, Yandex.ru, Euro news.net, bbc.co.uk, Helsinkin Sanomat	Almost every day	English Russian

	(in English). Forums – very seldom, only for reading.		
Viktor: Finnish, Russian, German, International	Finnish and Russian news on TV, internet	Every day	Finnish Russian
Olga: International, Russian, Finnish	English and Russian news on internet, international news	Almost every day	English Russian
Inga: Russian, Finnish	Mainly discussion with spouse, TV	Ones a week or even less	Russian Finnish
Oleg: Finnish, Russian, International	Russian news channels on TV, Finnish newspapers, Russian newspapers, internet news portals in Russian, discussion with relatives and friends.	Almost every day	Finnish English Russian
Tatiana: International, Russian, Finnish local news and on country level, French	Finnish, Russian and French TV and internet sources – blogs, newspapers, news portals.	Every day	Finnish English Russian French
Nastja: International, Finnish, Russian	Finnish, Russian and international news portals on internet, discussion with friends and relatives.	Rearly, "when something happens", ones a month	Finnish English Russian
Ruslan	Finnish news from TV, almost no discussions on political topics	Nearly every evening	Finnish Russian
Nadja: not particularly interested, mainly Finnish news in everyday routine	Finnish news from TV, almost no discussions on political topics	Almost every evening	Finnish, English Russian
Sergey: International, mainly	Finnish TV, Russian news from internet portals	Discussions very rarely, a few times a	Finnish Russia

Finnish		year if something happens	
Russian: Finnish occasionally	Russian news from internet portals	Discussions with wife, rarely, ones a week, if she initiates discussion	Russian
Leonid: Finnish, Russian and International	Yle 2 in Russian, news from Russian internet portals, for example: Rambler	Discussions with friends regularly, couple of times a month	Russian
Dimitri: Finnish, Russian and International	Russian TV from internet	Discussions with friends, less than ones a month	Russian, Finnish