

TRANSNATIONAL FAIRYTALE: FINNISH-RUSSIAN TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES

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Specialization in Social Anthropology

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Doctor of Social Sciences

University of Tampere

2014

University of Tampere

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Tampere Peace Research Institute

DARIA CHISTIAKOVA: Transnational fairytale: Finnish-Russian transnational families.

Master's Thesis, 105 pages

Master Programme in Peace Mediation and Conflict Research

September, 3

Abstract

This thesis explores the transnational family life of Russian female migrants in Finland which is challenged by the possible misunderstandings in the transnational marriage. Such misunderstandings, as I propose, may be explained by the notion of mutual expectations of the foreign spouses. Their cultural backgrounds, social behavioural norms, gender order and personal traits make them look for a compromise and mechanisms of negotiation of their conflicts in their transnational relationships.

Moreover, it is believed that more often cross cultural marriages and transnational families entail a greater source of family frictions, conflicts and misunderstandings than traditional nuclear families established in the local context. However, my fieldwork research revealed a different story, more subtle and more positive and free from the common prejudices about transnational marriages that are usually exposed more to the conflicting situations. The study reveals not only the negative experiences of immigrant Russian women in Finland, but also their positive experiences.

In the thesis, I studied the dynamics of mutual expectations of Russian female migrants and their Finnish spouses in the context of transnational marriage. The thesis consists of three main dimensions, which I consider as core elements, that help to reveal the problematic of Finnish-Russian family frictions. The first dimension is devoted to the notion of transnational family in general, which preliminary helps to reflect on the possible problems a transnational family may pass through. The second dimension describes the gender order in both countries, what also helps to trace and predict the potential misunderstandings of spouses from different countries. The third element is historical, it provides the historical overview of the common history of rivalries and peace, and mobility trends. In this dimension, I particularly refer to collective memory that also shapes and predetermines the perception of both nationalities. The research results are based on an ethnographic study I conducted in September-December 2013 in the city of Tampere, Finland, among Russian female migrants. The ethnography included the methods of interview and participant observation. In the interview method I applied the method of life stories. It helped me to have an insight into the ways of lives of female Russian migrants in Finland. In my research, I particularly refer to the experiences of immigrant women and the self-constructed images transmitted through their life experiences which shaped in their narrative.

Keywords: Transnationalism, Transnational family, Finnish-Russian families, Transnational marriage, Marriage migration.

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Introduction

Finland and Russia - their geographical location with their common border and ambivalent character of relationships according to historical evidence make people in both countries ask why they are still so different. For Finns the border with Russia has marked the edge of the national state and geographical territory of Finland, but additionally, has been a symbol of independence, a politically, socially and culturally built and rebuilt phenomenon (Lähteenmäki, 2007, p.35). The border did not represent only geographical and physical separation but also emotional and mental detachment of both countries.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Finland and Russia signed an agreement regarding “neighbouring and cooperation” in 1992 which signalled the promise of a positive direction for the development of relations between the two countries (Wijhe, 2010). In turn, it increased the number of border crossings and immigration between two countries, especially from the region of Karelia.

The place of the Russian-speaking population occupies a particular place in the history of immigration processes of Finland. The first migratory wave happened in the 18th century, whilst in general three migratory waves of Russians to Finland happened before the Second World War (Niemi, 2007). The Russian immigrants who moved to Finland during these migratory waves were called “Old Russians” whose descendants still live in Finland (ibid.).

According to “Statistics Finland” the largest group of foreign migrants in Finland consists of representatives from the former Soviet Union and Russia, and estimated 70,899 in 2012 (Statistics Finland, 2013).

Unsurprisingly, immigration also touched upon both cultures, with the increasing number of people who spoke both languages – Russian and Finnish. Thus, communication between people has also become more intensive and possible, which, resulted in the increase of transnational marriages (Wijhe, 2010).

It is often uncritically assumed in the public imagination as well as in research, particularly on transnationalism (Charsley, 2012, Goulbourne et al., 2010, Hellum et al., 2011) that cross-cultural marriages and transnational families entail a greater source of family frictions, conflicts and misunderstandings, than in traditional nuclear families established in the local context. It is often believed that there is a gap between mutual expectations of two partners from different cultural backgrounds and the real everyday lives they experience after their marriage. In this context, it is interesting to look at the dynamics of mutual expectations and

life stories of Russian women and their Finnish spouses in the transnational context of Russia and Finland that share a common history of wars and peace, cross/cultural interactions and have the common geographical border, but who still feel separated from one another. The thesis is devoted to the ethnographic study of Finnish-Russian families which are determined by the perspective of the transnational mobility between state borders Russia and Finland, which also has a different impact on the actors of the transnational couples.

Chapter 1 Research Scope

Gender, expectations and life trajectories

At the beginning of my research, my aim was to reveal possible conflicting situations based on the mutual expectations of spouses, which are constructed from their cultural and social models of behaviour and gender. Moreover, the notion of the gender is detached from the typical stereotypical images of both countries; there is an attempt to reveal the construction of gender referring to the narratives of my interlocutors. Through them, I represented a particular vision of gender models of Russian women themselves and Finnish men as well¹. I regard the notion of gender in the conditions of transnational mobility. It means that the changing character of gendered practices is challenged by particular contexts. As Marko Juntunen claimed, gender is influenced by the mobile contexts and multiple discourses (Juntunen, 2002). That is why it is necessary to take into account the varied discourses in the process of understanding the construction of the gender order in both countries. However, my fieldwork research revealed a different story more positive and free from the common prejudices about transnational marriages.

This work gives an insight in the changing character of Russian women's life trajectories in their transnational marriage and in their move to Finland. Furthermore, it traces the process of the transformation of their perceptions, expectations and personal identity in the sense of their cultural settings; the transformation of their socially and culturally constructed gender and behavioural models and their identities. Moreover, the paper investigates the problem of possible "mutual expectations" in the Finnish - Russian transnational families as the prerequisite for the emergence of conflicts and mutual misunderstandings.

¹ I concentrate mainly on Russian women's representations of gender roles, but it does not mean as I eliminated the Finnish men from the study. As I focus on Russian women resided in Finland, I describe the gender order from their perspective. Here I follow the already changed (modified) gender practices and models (changed from the times of their being in Russia) after their living in Finland for some time; also the men's roles are mostly presented through narratives and contexts of Russian women.

The factors which have been mentioned in the beginning of the introduction, and the international processes of today, underpin the need for the reflection on the historical element of the thesis, which also was reinforced by the narratives of my interlocutors during the process of fieldwork. Essentially, that there is a need to regard the emotional and cultural distances in everyday life interactions between Finns and Russians caused by historical factors. Their influence on the relationships in the transnational family can be explained by the concept of *collective memory*, thus, there is a need to refer to the historical approach, however, with the ethnography process in priority. It is also important to see how mobility trends develop now and in the past, at the Soviet Union times when the mobility across the borders was restricted.

Ethnographic adventure

This thesis is the result of ethnographic research conducted in September – December of 2013 in Tampere, Finland. I started my fieldwork process after I contacted the members of the Russian Club in Tampere, who came to Finland a long time ago. At the beginning of the research I was not confident if I gather the data, however, using the “snowball sampling” method, I utilized the social networks of my Russian interlocutors which allowed me to keep in contact with the representatives of the Russian community.

The research included the method of interviews and participant observation. The latter allowed me to adapt to the styles of communication with the Russian interlocutors, as being an insider of the Russian community also has a particular impact on the research. Due to this, I maintained a critical approach and engaged in self-reflexivity during all stages of the research to ensure that I remain unbiased.

The use of the life histories has long been a methodological approach in ethnographic research (Davies, 2008, p.204), which I applied during the interviews. This method allowed me to follow the personal histories of the interviewed women’s mobility, its influence on them, and to determine how their Russian background (socially constructed gender models, cultural background, and mentality) influenced them and their partner in their transnational marriages. When discussing transnational marriage, there is a need for understanding of how, in this context, Russian women approach the notion of transnational marriage. It is important to know what meanings they apply to the notion of the transnational family, and what difficulties it may include from their point of view.

It means that I approach the notion of family according to the Russian women's definitions and thus their visions of *how they* live and make their own transnational families, and if their socially constructed representations are similar to each other or not, and if they are different then why is it so. There is a need to reveal the differences of the Finnish and Russian ethno-cultural backgrounds, which, as it turned out bears a sufficient meaning, especially in the process of formation of the transnational Finnish –Russian family.

Transnational actors

The research was undertaken in the perspective of *transnational anthropology*, which is not meant to reify a view of the world as composed of sovereign, spatially discontinuous units but rather intends to destabilize the very notion that cultures and societies are contained and indeed defined by the nation state (Malkki, 1992, p.27).

Therefore, I regard my Russian interlocutors not as common migrants, having the aim of economic gain or better living conditions, but I consider them as cosmopolitan actors/individuals who encounter transnational practices and shape their identities in the context of transnational livelihood.

I do not regard transnationalism (in the context of ties and kinship) as a striking feature of immigrant Russian women, instead I investigate how their cultural and social models of behaviour change in different contexts. I discover how their life practices transformed after arrival and adaptation in Finland, how they built their relationships with a foreigner, a Finnish spouse and if there is a conflict or not, if yes, then what can serve as a reason, and if mutual expectations could serve as the reason. The research is focused on the relationships and possible conflicts as a possible consequence of mutual expectations between wife and husband, or partners who live together, and does not touch upon the children as it would lead us to a different direction of the research.

According to “Statistic Finland” the statistical data gives evidence to the argument of the increasing tendencies for the feminization of migration of Russian women in Finland ² (Statistics Finland, 2013). In 2012, the amount of Russian women who officially married a Finnish spouse constituted 3,332 while for men it was 1,221. Additionally, according to the data³ (Families by Nationality of woman/man, Year, Family type and Age of woman/ man), in 2012 the amount of Russian women officially married a Finnish spouse constituted 642 while for men it was 27 (Families by Country of birth of woman/man, Year, Family type and Age of

² The age of the spouses was not taken into account

³ The age of the spouses was not taken into account

woman/man). Thus, I regard Russian women as the subject of this study, because of their involvement in transnational marriages and migration.

In relation to the listed motivations and theoretical perspectives, a set of sufficient questions were outlined: if the mutual expectations in transnational marriage exist, on what ground they are constructed (gender or cultural)? How do they influence on transnational marriage? Thus, it followed that gender order differences could be considered as a core element of the differences in mutual perceptions, thus it led me to the second question: what are the differences in the formation process of the gender order in Finland and Russia? In connection with that, it is also important to know how do marriage migration and transnationalism influence on the Russian women and their families' lives. When beginning my research I did not focus particularly on the aspects of economic and social status of the Finnish men marrying Russian women, however, after some time spent in the fieldwork and analysing interviews such a need appeared, what resulted in the next question: what can be said about the Finnish men who marry Russian women in terms of his socioeconomic position and gendered expectations? I also asked if mutual expectations may be regarded not only in the context of gender, but in the context of the culture as well.

Theoretical approaches

From that I determined the three theoretical approaches which will provide perspectives of the thesis. Thus, the first element is transnationalism. The quotations below demonstrate that the transnational perspective gains its interdisciplinary popularity and undermines the notion of state borders with their regulations and norms, with the idea of the intensification of the relationships on the global level, as an indomitable process of globalization and mobility:

“Today transnationalism seems to be everywhere, at least in social science. That is, across numerous disciplines there is a widespread interest in economic, social and political linkages between people, places and institutions crossing nation-state borders and spanning the world” (Vertovec, 2009, p.1).

“The recent years transnationalism has become one of the fundamental ways of understanding contemporary migrant practices across the full range of social sciences (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007, in Vertovec, 2009, p.13). Since 90s “the transnational turn” has provided a new analytic optic which makes visible the increasing intensity and scope of circular flows of persons, goods, information and symbols triggered by international labour migration” (ibid).

I regard the family in the perspective of transnationalism and follow the changing character of family members' practices across borders, which leads us to the notion of the transnational family. The transnational paradigm brought in to the sphere of family life allows us to re-evaluate the role of the family in the transnational practices of mobility.

However, in this thesis more attention is paid to the intimate sphere of relationships in the context of the transnational family, what means that the informants' personal reflections in their narratives. There is a shift from the more "global" perception of transnationalism in which scholars very often place the notion of the family as the side problem to the more intimate.

Matyska (2014) stated that "the importance of transnational family comes from its central role for shaping the everyday transnationalism and the larger political structures in which it is reciprocally embedded, bridging the private-public divide."(p.12) Moreover, the problematic of transnational families was not given much attention in various pieces of work on migration. Mostly it was connected with the studies regarding migration, return and circular migration patterns, remittances, investments and diasporas seen as the area of transnational families and various national communities and spaces that families straddle (Goulbourne et al., 2010). Furthermore, Vuorela and Bryceson (2002) brought a new insight into the studies on transnational families that changed the perception of the notion and forced a shift in the focus to look at the experiences of transnational families from another angle.

The second element is the gendered approach to migration and transnational families' formation.

In the area of transnational studies, and particularly transnational families, the gendered perspective has been neglected for a long time. A little attention was paid to the important differences in the gender models of members of transnational couples, which could result in the conflicts between them. The feminization of migration gains its strength, what results in women's active participation in the international labour arena. Thus, very often these migration trends cause in the gender imbalance for the host population (Sims in Charsley, 2012, p.164). Furthermore, Lucy Williams underlines that "the effects of gender and gender norms on migration patterns and trends is another area which has been under-theorized" and emphasizes that "the women shouldn't be assumed to be typical or as "essential" marriage migrants" (ibid., p.26) which also leads to the stigmatization and rise of various stereotypes. Therefore, in the case of Russian women migrants, there is a need for examination of gender patterns formed according their cultural settings, as well as Finnish models of behaviour.

The third element is the historical approach. The historical approach allows tracing the “historical baggage” accumulated by both countries, which in a special way influences the perception of two neighbouring nations – Russian and Finnish. We have to take into account the events that happened in the relations of Russia and Finland in the 19th and 20th centuries, mostly, these events led to the negative perception of countries from the both sides. It is important to bear in mind those particular time backgrounds and social processes at the time when my interlocutors were leaving their places of origin and married a foreign spouse. The changing nature of Russian women practices, the places of origin and destination should be reflected as well as their ethnic and national self-identification during their movements.

Structure of the thesis

The work consists of two parts – a theoretical and an ethnographical part. The first chapters provide the theoretical grounds with interpretation of the empirical results gained during of the process of ethnography. The last chapter is fully devoted to the interpretation of ethnographic data and attempts to reveal the problematic themes discovered during the ethnography process.

The first chapter is an introductory chapter of the thesis. There I discuss the problematic of the researched topic. The motivations, research questions and approaches are presented there. I also give a brief outline on the understanding of the notion of transnational family, with the theoretical approaches and interpretations of the authors from the field of transnational anthropology.

The second chapter gives an insight into the methodological framework but also encounters with the challenges of the research, methods and ethical issues. This chapter discusses the method of ethnography applied in the research process particularly in the framework of the topic of the thesis. I also deliberate the issue of the reflexivity of the researcher during the process of fieldwork, the emotional side of it, and the dual belonging to the community that is expressed in the status of being an “insider”.

In the third chapter I monitor and discuss the concepts and theories devoted to the phenomena of transnationalism. Moreover, there I reveal the important changes in the understanding of the notion “transnational”.

The fourth chapter is a retrospective view of the historical background of the relations between Russia and Finland and migration trends from the beginning of the 19th century. Additionally, it describes mobility tendencies in the post-Soviet period and border cooperation initiatives, which

are important for the explanation of migration motives of Russian women to Finland at that period.

The fifth chapter reveals the concept of the transnational family, which serves as the theoretical basis of the work. Many scholars interpreted the term “transnational family” in different ways. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) in their book “The transnational family, New European frontiers and global networks” define it as “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely “familyhood”, even across national borders” (p.3).

Furthermore, I explain how it is possible to approach / interpret gender in a transnational setting in the sixth chapter of the thesis. There I deal with the notion of “mutual expectations” which is explained in the terms of gender differences in both countries where I regard the possible clashes of the expectations in Finnish-Russian transnational family. Moreover, the interpersonal relations in the Finnish-Russian transnational marriage are revealed here in a particular way, where emotional, sexual and economic exchanges are intertwined and these topics are revealed in the narrations of my interlocutors.

The subsequent seventh chapter is the ethnographic chapter of the thesis representing the description of my interlocutors’ narratives intertwined with the theoretical justification of the thesis. The moral and mental reflections of Russian women migrated to Finland are portrayed by them in this part during the process of interviews and discussions. This chapter explains various obstacles, which Russian women overcome after their arrival and settlement in Finland. The topics described here vary, but they reveal the realities of Russian female immigrants’ experiences that made a decision and married a foreigner. There I explore the notions of stereotyping and the stigma connected with the term “sham marriages”, the problematic of mutual expectations in perspectives of culture and gender. I also characterize the process of integration for Russian female immigrants. The concluding chapter includes the important remarks and perspectives for the research.

Research methodology and data collection

In my methodology and data collection I employed the qualitative methods and the methods of ethnography which are considered as the core of the thesis. The research techniques included participant observation and interviews with the interlocutors. The choice of methods can be explained by the aims to examine the personal life experience of interlocutors and

understanding of the process of making their transnational families here in Finland. Furthermore, the method of ethnography is considered as traditional in anthropology studies and its improvisational character allowed me to adapt the research techniques to the changing character of the research.

I used the form of face-to-face interviews during the process of the fieldwork. All the interviews were conducted in Russian and consequently translated in English. The interviews were unstructured and conducted in the form of free discussion with the method of life stories. As Davies (2008) noted, the method of the life stories gives the researcher the possibility to provide research insight into ways of lives of those being studied (p.167). Moreover, such method allowed the interlocutors to tell about their life experiences without any restrictions from my side and made the process of discussion comfortable.

The method of participant observation was inseparable from the interviews process when I could follow the reaction and the gestures of the informants whilst writing my fieldnotes. The interviews were provided in different places, according to the women's desire at their homes where the friendly atmosphere contributed to heart-to-heart talks. With regard to ethical issues, every interview was recorded with the permission of the interlocutors and kept from publishing. Moreover, anonymity has been a significant condition for the interlocutors during the process of the interviews.

I realize that my research is on a sensitive topic and understand that it can be challenging to talk about people's private life. Whilst I tried to avoid uncomfortable situations (although for the purposes of the research even negative emotions are important and reflect the reality), my personal tact and character did not allow me to continue with bitter moments. I also shared my personal experience and thoughts; in several cases, some interlocutors gave me an advice about my own life situations and experiences. This shows the position of trust and respect of the interviewees.

The process of the fieldwork will be described in details in the following chapter, moreover, there I also discuss the role of the improvisational character of the method of ethnography, the difficulties I met – my dual belonging to the Russian community and the status of the researcher, self-reflexivity and immersion into the field.

Chapter 2 Doing ethnography in transnational perspective

According to Cerwonka & Malkki “Ethnography is understood as situated, a long-term, empirical field research (as opposed to its other meaning as a genre of writing and a practice of representation), is simultaneously a critical theoretical practice, a quotidian ethical practice, and improvisational practice” (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p.164). Ethnography relies on improvisation and techniques not always define the enterprise of the ethnography. Moreover, as Cerwonka and Malkki claimed, the strategies and tactics in light of what the ethnographer is trying to know can be learned through the process of the fieldwork itself (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p.20), what happened in the case of my research. The ethnographic approach supposes the “immersion” (ibid., p.7) of the researcher in the lives of those studied, which in my project was necessary. As the researcher is involved in a long-time process of the interaction with informants, developing relationships with them, learning things about their lives and thoughts from different angles; it allows to tell about the notion of “thick description” which is one of the central focuses for the ethnographer in the research (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 59). Anthropology is a science of peculiar sensibility as Malkki noted; moreover as Haraway argued, it produces situated knowledge through long-term ethnographic fieldworks (Haraway in Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 162-163). Furthermore, the notion of sensibility could be applied to the ethnography process as well as the fieldwork itself supposes the immersion of the ethnographer in the field for the subsequent creation of the thick description which has been mentioned before. There are many improvisational dimensions to knowledge production and writing in general, but for ethnographic research, as Malkki suggested, “improvisation is indispensable”, it also provokes the research to develop a sense of time and process (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p.163).

As my research aims at increasing the understanding of social reality by developing explanations of socially constructed meanings, I believe by using the methodological toolkit of ethnography, allowed me to make the process of the fieldwork more flexible.

Cerwonka and Malkki (2007) underlined that “the fieldwork process captured in the correspondence suggests how one reads empirical details in the field through theory” and “ethnographic research involves constant movement between the theoretical and empirical back to” (pp.4-5, p.15). The method of the ethnography helps to construct the theoretical framework for the research and along with that confirms or disproves preliminary theoretical assumptions, what happened during my research process.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is the most commonly cited defining criteria of anthropology (Amit, 2000, p.1). “Ethnographic fieldwork must be experienced as performed rather than just communicated” (ibid). Amit (2000) also gave a definition to the field:

“‘Field’, therefore, has always been as much characterized by absences as by presences and hence necessitated a variety of corresponding methods...to explore processes not immediately or appropriately accessible through participant observation” (p. 12).

During the process of fieldwork, if the researcher shares a cultural identity with their research subjects, especially if the researcher studies objects at home, the status of insider may provide a researcher with a mistaken assumption that being an insider automatically makes the research “unproblematic” (Davies, 2008, p.42).

The debates concerning the “real fieldwork” were considered by Amit (2000), who revealed the difference between notions of ‘home’ and ‘abroad’ (p.55). In the traditional view, the “real” field is a geographically distant place from the place of living and origin of the ethnographer (Amit, 2000, p.3). In my case I was doing transnational fieldwork in Finland, but still communicating with a Russian community. Although I have not completed the research in both countries (only in Finland), this fieldwork carries the “duality of belonging” as Knowles (in Amit, 2000) labeled it. Thus, for me the field includes the Russian community (which is my native community) embedded in the context of Finnish society.

At the beginning of the research, whilst monitoring the theory on the phenomena of transnational families, their mobility and changing character of the socially constructed behaviour during transnational moves, I realized, that the method of *life stories* of Russian immigrant women in Finland will be central in my field work. The method is a reliable way for learning others’ construction meanings and understand their patterns of behaviours: “Ethnographies collect and study life histories not out of interest in just individual stories but in order to improve understanding of social and cultural processes more generally” (Davies, 2008, p. 207). However it is necessary to take into account that each individual’s life experience is individual and unique, thus, that challenges generalization. Additionally, the method allows the exploration of the lives of a given social category and to extract different range of themes and to abstract them, that results in the production of empirically generalizable knowledge (ibid.). Davies (2008) explained, “while interviewing individuals about their life stories, it is important to bear in mind that what is being collected are *remembered lives*. Obviously, there will be great individual variation in what is remembered, why certain things are remembered and how the memories are presented” (ibid., p.206). Some

important challenges also can be found in connection with the method – for instance, the nature of established relationships with the informants, way of recording interviews, possible audience of the informant, analysis of the collected material and its interpretation (ibid.). During the process of my interaction with the informants we maintained a friendly relationship and discussed their experiences of migrating to Finland, their background in general, perceptions of the Finnish culture, Finnish society and other different topics. As Cerwonka and Malkki (2007) noted, “fieldwork is always already a critical theoretical practice (a deeply and inescapably empirical practice), improvisational practice” (pp.5-6) that is why even the process of communication and discussion demands improvisation in the ethnography context, which I used during the interviews. Additionally, participant observation as one of the central ethnography methods, helped me to be involved with the informants which contributed to my understanding of their interpretations of the problems we discussed. I approached families according Russian women’s definitions, their visions of how they live and make their transnational families.

The established friendly relationships with informants, my motivation in this research and their mutual interest in the topic of research resulted in fruitful discussions and interviews. Our interactions had a mostly unstructured character. I believe that the freely occurring natural talk helps informants to share the information in an easy, informal and comfortable manner.

Self-reflexivity

With ethnography, the issue of immersion and reflexivity in the field is one of the central discussions in the anthropological tradition.

“Indeed, one could argue that transgression of the solitary fieldworker model of ethnographic fieldwork is as much an anthropological tradition as the model itself. If this model was unsustainable even during the less reflexive phases of anthropological production, the effort to retain a version of it, however reformed, to take account of fin-de-siècle sensitivities, in puzzling, given nearly two decades of effort to bring the anthropologist’s own positioning into focus” (Amit, 2000, p.6).

Thus, the author demonstrates that the ethnographer plays the role of a “solitary hero” who enters the field, and studies how people make sense of the world around them and how they construct social meanings. Due to this, self-reflexivity is one of the most important components of fieldwork for the ethnographer, despite the fact that it bears a contradictory character for scholars in the light of subjectivity and objectivity.

Considering this dilemma of reflexivity, with the conceptualisations of the subjectivity and the objectivity of the researcher during the fieldwork process, some scholars (Wengle, 2005; Amit, 2000; Davies, 2008; Cerwonka and Malkki, 2007; Rabinow, 1997) claim that it is naïve to rely on the ethnographer's neutrality in the process of fieldwork as his/her presence always has an impact on the process of fieldwork. As Cerwonka and Malkki (2007) noted, during the theory-building process emotional landscape and body-presence are important aspects in the ethnographic fieldwork, however, *the positivists approach* in anthropology claimed that researcher's subjectivity always hinders the purposes the objectivity (Cerwonka and Malkki, 2007, p.23).

Additionally, when ethnographers analyse and interpret other's people's constructions of reality, simultaneously they both create their own interpretations and constructions through their own lenses. Moreover, as Rabinow underlines, the anthropologist and informant both possess a "stock of experiences" which they would like to share with their own reflections (Rabinow, 1997, p.3). Thus, both construct shared meanings.

"The ethnographers are influenced by a "culturally mediated world, caught up in 'webs of signification' they themselves have spun" (Rabinow, 1977, p.151).

Indeed, as Steier stated, "the research process as one in which researcher and reciprocators are engaged in co-constructing a world" (in Davies, 2008, p.8). In my research, the presence of reflexivity is significant, as being "an insider" of Russian society, and having been raised in Russian culture, the interpretation of the social and cultural meanings of the Russian informants goes through my own perception as well. Additionally, sometimes our opinions on various aspects are similar, which takes me away from the neutral position and interpretation of the ethnographer.

Anthropological dilemmas and ethics

A traditional assumption in the field of anthropology – a firm belief that ethnographic authenticity is guaranteed by the social and spatial distance of the fieldwork. The character of the fieldwork has changed however, and it would be not appropriate to insist that geographical distance is the main factor for "real" fieldwork in contrast to the traditional views in anthropology. Thus, the double feeling of both – belonging to Russian community in Finnish society (in Finland) makes my research not completely "detached" or distanced from my own social background regarding the mental and emotional side of the fieldwork in contrast to a geographical factor.

The question of ethical dilemmas started when I undertook my fieldwork in Tampere. Indeed, ethics is one of the important key frames of the research project and nowadays the deliberation concerning the significance of the ethics becomes more and more re-evaluated (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p.4). The issue of anonymity in research also is one of the central; however the degree of the concern varies.

I conducted the interviews in the face-to-face form, when I could ask questions, follow their reactions, gestures and keep writing and recording process. The interviews were recorded on audio and kept free from publishing due to privacy considerations; additionally they gave their consent for me to use their answers in this thesis. I made the field notes following my ethnographic methods and wrote the interviews down by verbatim. The research is about sensitive topic and understand that for them it was difficult to speak about their private life, but I tried to make the way of discussion as friendlier as possible and not make them feel uncomfortable. If they did not consent for the interview to be recorded, their responses were noted down by hand (made the fieldnotes), without prejudices.

Still, there were some challenging issues to overcome regarding privacy, for instance interlocutors Oksana and Lyudmila, were worried about anonymity. Oksana was surprised that I obtained her contact e-mail address through the Russian Club, I felt a small indignation in her words, but, her worries could be justified as it is widely accepted that a connective agent should first ask the informant if she wants to participate in the project and then to pass on the contacts details. Lyudmila's fear was caused by safety considerations due to her divorce from her Finnish husband, she asked me not to record the interview; I respected her wishes and did not record the discussion.

Regarding the questions of ethics, Dyck likened participant observation to a form of espionage (Amit , 2000, p.43). He emphasized that anthropologist may feel as though they are "acting like a spy". Moreover the author metaphorically called the process of the participant observation "wearing a cap with a label proclaiming ""anthropologist at work""", he underlined that he was unable to resolve this dilemma. Thus, in my research case this dilemma exists as well.

To sum up, it is possible to say that the method of ethnography is improvisational in its character. Certainly ethnography has its methods and techniques, but they are also flexible and contextual. For instance, Geertz insisted that doing ethnography is not a matter of methods (Cerwonka and Malkki, 2007, p.181). As it was mentioned in the beginning, the anthropology itself a science which brings sensitivity in the research of other people. Cerwonka calls the

anthropology as “art”, “a human science”, etc., and those definitions particularly fit the notion of anthropology (p.181). Doing ethnography is a creative process, although including various challenges for the ethnographer. But despite all the challenges the interpretive approach of anthropology is an important and probably one of the precise ways to the understanding of other people and cultures.

Chapter 3 Between Finland and Russia: a transnational fairytale

The notion of the transnationalism is relatively new in migration studies. It is well known that the concept was constantly used and misused, what often brought the confusion in connection to the inability to clarify the definition. Moreover, when implying the term in the migration studies scholars argued that there is a lack of clarity in definition of the *transnationalism*.

The transnational perspective regarding migration has evolved through a number of studies (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998; Levitt, 2001; Vertovec, 2004, 2009; Glick Schiller, 2004). It is important to underline that the transnational paradigm shifted from multidisciplinary field of migration studies and some prominent works in the field of anthropology to the new interpretation of the notion “transnational” (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, Glick Schiller, 2004).

At the beginning the study surrounding migration research was mostly focused on the assumption that migrants adapted themselves to their place of immigration, rather than continue to return emotionally, economically and physically to the place of origin (Vertovec, 2009, p. 14). However, in the 1990s there was “transnational turn” which gave a new way of understanding transnationalism. It resulted in the increase and the scope of flow of persons, goods, information and symbols triggered by international labour migration (ibid., p.13).

What is transnationalism?

Vertovec (2009) defined transnationalism as a “condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common virtual arena of activity” (p. 3).

Glick Schiller (1992) explained transnationalism as:

‘Our earlier conceptions of immigrants no longer suffice...now, a new kind of migrating population is emerging, composed of those networks, activities and patterns of life encompass

both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field...we argue that a new conceptualization is needed...We call this new conceptualization "transnationalism..." (Glick Schiller, 1992, p.1).

Vertovec (2009) claimed that the interest in transnationalism was also sustained by the interest in globalization and even stated that transnationalism is "globalization's manifestation" (p.2). Following the increase of different means of communication, it became possible for migrants to have multiple localities, which resulted in gaining multiple identities. Thus, family and kinship ties, accordingly, moved from local to more global contexts (ibid).

As Al-Ali and Koser (2002) explained the impact of the transnationalism is defined in practice – in the everyday life of migrants rather than only in theory (p.1). Another positive aspect is that the empirical case studies constantly add something new to the concept of transnationalism. Furthermore, it is important to trace how the dynamics of the relationships and their character between the migrants and their home, changed after they left and how transnational processes are related to the changing character of peoples' meanings.

Al-Ali and Koser (2002) shed light on issues have not been discussed before. For instance one of the concrete problems is that the host society perceives immigrants as "anomalies" (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, p.3). The authors claim that migrants can be perceived not only as "anomalies", but also, rather as "representatives of increasingly globalized world" (ibid.). This statement is supported by Russian interlocutors who claimed that they did not feel themselves as marginal group despite the widespread prejudices.

The majority of my interlocutors was born and raised in Soviet Union, where emigration was strictly prohibited, however they settled in Finland and claimed that they feel comfortable today. Thus, it is possible to regard the immigrant groups not as "anomalies" but as cosmopolitans who arrange their life across different geographical locations.

Scholars (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998; Vertovec, 2009) distinguish several categories of transnationalism, amongst which the sub-categories of transnationalism "from above" and "from below" takes their relevance for my research. In the definition of the status of Russian female migrants that ended up in Finland. I refer to Vertovec (2009) and regard these women as immigrants who belong to the category of transnationalism "from below". Transnationalism "from below" refers to the local activities and where "everyday" people are the principal agents while the transnationalism "from above" is supposed to reflect the

transnational processes connected with global capital, media and political institutions (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002, p.2).

Transnationalism “from below” is described by Smith and Guarnizo as “the ways that the everyday practices of ordinary people, their feelings and understandings of their conditions of existence, often modify those very conditions and thereby shape rather than merely reflect new modes of urban culture” (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, p.67). The authors claimed that transnationalism “from below” is democratic and empowering, which allows us to see the world as homogenic and equal for everyone (ibid., p.69). Thus no person is excluded from the possibility in the participation of global and transnational processes.

Scholars claim that migrant lives are exposed to particular modifications when the individual is engaged in transnational practices (Vertovec, 2009, p.61). These changes can be vividly reflected in the families and connected with the area of gender. In my research the focus on the family is especially significant and it is important to trace the impact of the transnationalism upon it. The transnational activities in the family mark the beginning of the changes in the family when one or several members of the family engage in mobility abroad.

In Russian families, the question of mothering and parenthood is very significant. The care, adults undertake for the children are very important especially for the elder generations – Russian grandmothers called *babushkas* are often ready to take care of the children. Among my interlocutors the majority of them are *babushkas* that maintain relationships with their children and grandchildren across borders. As Lobel noted -“long-distance parenthood” linking “fractured families and geographically dispersed homes” which is common place for the majority of migrants (in Vertovec, 2009, p.61).

When socialization and family life take place across two or more settings, it is usual that the migrants’ stories of mobility, adaptation and integration have their own scenarios, which leads us to the notion of *habitus*. It means that the migrants are supposed to cope with various ranges of cultural differences in their transnational lives that also could be expressed in new forms of the *habitus* (Vertovec, 2009, p.69). Being cosmopolitan in the conditions of the transnational experiences, the migrants are able to possess openness for cultural practices and adapt to them.

In the context of the transnational paradigm, the family takes its particular place. The relations between separated members of families are sustained across borders for different periods of time. Additionally, it is important to trace how these practices of transnational communication

are shaped not only across borders but also at the place of destination particularly between foreign spouses. There is a special attention paid to how the transnational actors (migrants) form their transnational intimate relations across borders and upon arrival guides us to the next division of the chapter devoted to transnational families.

Russian female cosmopolitans and their “mobile livelihoods”

How does it sound for a Russian woman if somebody asks her about move to a foreign country, alone, without the knowledge of English? One of my close relatives answered to this question: “I cannot imagine it.” What does it mean for Russian women to migrate to the neighbouring country of Finland? Do they imagine what waits for them a new country of destination? According to the majority of responses of Russian interlocutors they could not imagine what expected them upon arrival in Finland. As one of the interlocutors said: “I didn’t expect anything, when I came here...absolutely nothing, because why should I wait for something? I just knew more and more.” So, what does make a middle aged Russian woman migrate to the neighbouring European country? Perhaps it could be justified by the popular images of the Western world, so beckoning and inviting, promising the stability of tomorrow’s day and wealthy livelihood.

Inga, 62, underlines that from her point of view in contrast to Russia, Finland is reliable in the contexts of social welfare and approach of Finns they use social services. However, she also noted that the system has its obvious gaps and disadvantages. The social systems of both countries distinguish what makes Russian women to try their luck and to change their way of life. Another Russian woman, Katerina also stated that Finnish society and social conditions look civilized and she likes it, she also challenged the idea of stereotypical images of Finns as emotionally cold and Finland as a boring place. Certainly, when you come at first at Helsinki it spins you around... it is capital city of Finland, a European country, with different culture, society, people, currency, language, customs and way of life which can be characterized as Western. Coming from Russia immediately reveals all the evident contrasts, including infrastructure and impressions from the outside - smooth, level roads, green parks where people are laying on the grass and reading books, parking places, a special style of architecture and cathedrals, big supermarkets and shopping centres and the panorama of the South Harbour. These images are opposite to the images of high-populated cities of Russia. These images and impressions, and not only, make Russian women to take decisions and abandon

their past lives in Russian in order to spend their lives in the European country, perhaps with a reliable, wealthy Finnish spouse who is eager to take care of her.

Russian women mentioned the vivid contrasts in the social atmosphere, emotional and psychological background of countries.

In the interviews the interlocutors demonstrated their contradictory opinion in the context of social atmosphere of Russia and Finland. Nina, 51, who was born in Saratov, Russia, stated that in the perceptions of Finns and Western people the Russian way of life is perceived as “unreal”. She meant that Finnish people are adapted to the comfortable services and comfort and that they would hardly stand the conditions of living in Russia. She also refers to the peoples’ manners of behaviour, underlying that people are ready to push each other in order to get the place in the bus, which is not accepted in Finland. Slava , 44, and Katerina, 34, emphasized vividly the contrast in the way of life between two countries – they claim that you have to survive in Russia. Following my own experience, for instance, when I returned to Russia in Summer 2013, I experienced several similar cases as Nina listed for instance. Certainly, the social behavior and manners of people depend on their family and behavioural backgrounds; a foreigner is much more likely to get cultural shock or be disturbed by someone’s impolite move or word. That is one of the social contrasts that make Russian women desire a more peaceful attitude so specific to Finnish culture. Moreover, the “survival” factor mentioned by interlocutors deals with on-going economic situation and a lack of social services in Russia.

Russian women moving to Finland: who are they?

My own admiration for Finland started about 10 years ago, Finnish beautiful melodic music influenced on me. Since that time I became more interested in Finland, Finnish society, language, people, and the style of communication. Especially the nature and scenery. After some years, I visited Helsinki and fall in love with it. Being a neighboring country of Russia with its common border, this country was distinct from the place of my origin. Since then, I became aware of many things happening in Finland. I also was interested in migration flow of Russian women to Finland. I began to wonder what were the reasons behind their migration and why did they move there. What kind of women were they and how do they look like. Thus my ethnographic adventure began in Tampere, Finland in 2013.

Between September-December 2013, I interviewed nine Russian women. Eight of them ended up in Tampere, Finland by mean of marriage and one woman migrated to Finland with her

mother as repatriates. The age of women I interviewed varied from thirty-four to sixty-two at the moment of the interviews. They all have different places of origin in Russia and the time they migrated to Finland varies. The mobility of three women in contrast to other six was more intensive with the constant maintenance of the contacts with their transnational members of the families left in the places of origin. The duration of their residence in Finland ranged from three to twenty years and the length of their marriage with a Finnish spouse varies from three years to over twenty-eight years. Still, the majority was born in Saint- Petersburg (Leningrad) and Petrozavodsk (Karelia), neighbouring areas of Finland that logically, resulted in their migration. Other women were born in Saratov, Siberia (then moved to Vyborg or St. Petersburg), Kazan and Chita. I met with them in different places, I visited two interlocutors at their homes and they were very hospitable and prepared food. Here I refer to the popular stereotype about Russian hospitality and politeness. Although they did not know me, they tried to create a very calm and “home” like atmosphere during our discussions. I still maintain friendly relationships with some of the interlocutors; I have met several of them after our first meeting. Interlocutor Svetlana also invited me as a guest/friend just to have a chat and cook at her home.

Additionally, a marital status of the women varied. One woman, Anna, 56, was single but has been dating with a partner for a long time. Five women are still married and three women were divorced. Nearly all the women had children born in Russia from previous marriages; some children already have their own families. The educational background of women differs from secondary education to the higher education level in different fields. One informant, Slava recently expressed her wish to start a higher education in the course of psychology in her hometown – Petrozavodsk (Karelia).

All women have, or had, relationships with a Finnish man; some Finns had their Ingrian roots. The women either became acquainted with Finnish men through the Internet, met them by accident in journey between Russia and Finland or being in Finland particularly. According to the narratives of the women, the average age of the husbands at the moment when they met was between fifty to fifty-three years old. One woman was thirty years old, and her potential husband was thirty-two at the moment of their acquaintance. The social statuses of the Finnish men are different as well. The majority of them had work (at the moment of the interviews), and four of them were part-time working employee, worked occasionally or were retired. In addition, three Finnish spouses have high work positions (directors or bosses); two had middle class working positions. Their occupational fields were different – doctor, hydro engineer, the head of the company, factory worker and some women did not reveal the information

concerning the positions of their husbands. The educational level included mostly graduation from schools, specialized colleges; four spouses finished the universities. Additionally, their past marriage experiences were different – the majority had several marriages mostly with Finnish women before getting married a Russian woman, some of them have children from the former marriages.

Being Russian

When I met my interlocutors, I recognized them fast. They look different from Finnish women. Five of them looked “Russian”: the majority of them had coloured hair, they wore make up, and three of them wore bright lipstick (red and pearl shade). Five of them were wearing gold; however, it was modest and fitted them well. Nevertheless, two women (Anna with Ingrian roots and Galina from Kazan) did not wear makeup, due to being ladies of a more mature age. However, only Katerina was wearing heeled shoes when she came to the meeting. She was a bit coquettish and was smoking a thin cigarette when I met her near a café. I knew that the cigarette she was smoking was brought from Russia; I have never seen a Finnish woman with this type of cigarette. This type of cigarettes is considered as “feminine” in Russia and women usually smoke it in restaurants, pubs or, for instance, when they flirt. But returning to the topic of heels, I noticed that the majority of women were wearing everyday “flat heels” or sneakers, contradicting Russian standards of female appearance.

Lyudmila was the most vivid example of a Russian woman. She wore a sheepskin coat (later she confessed that she got it from the second-hand shop called *Kirppis* in Finland), her makeup was very garish. She confessed that she also owned her place in one of the second hand shops where she sold her clothes. Another interlocutor Slava used a homemade hair mask made when I met her. All these details express the aspiration of Russian women to look beautiful, not only for men but for themselves as well. Only two women (Oksana and Galina) visually looked more assimilated into Finnish society without clear indications of “foreignness”. I suppose it can be connected with the conception of the segmented *assimilation*, which supposes the eradication of the social elements for ethnic/racial distinctions, with the aim of similarity with the host society (Vertovec, 2009, p.79).

Oksana’s appearance was influenced by her way of life and work obligations as she worked as a teacher in pre-school educational establishment with children. Due to having constant contact with children and Finnish parents, speaking in Finnish fluently she adapted her style closely to the Finnish way of dressing. Galina wore simple clothes without any jewellery and her hair was her natural colour and she did not wear makeup.

The formation of *identity* is a significant issue in transnational life. The experiences accumulated by migrants in their places of origin and other habitats, constitute their cultural backgrounds that have a direct influence on their identity formation. Vertovec (2009) noted that each habitat or locality provides a person with a set of identity-conditioning factors (p.77). He also emphasized that there is still the lack of clarity in the definition of the multiple localities - “transnational social field”, “transnational social space”, “transnational village “or “translocality” – all these definitions, however make an impact on the identities of migrants (multifaceted nature of identity of migrants due to their transnational experiences) in the context of the transnational experiences (ibid.). During their time of living in Finland, and moving from one location to another, the Russian interlocutors collected varied cultural meanings and traits and retained them. It should be stated that some of the interlocutors have lived in other countries than just Finland and Russia – for example Anna, 56 has lived in Estonia and Ukraine, and Inga lived in Kenya. Furthermore, Anna retained the traits of behaviour, peculiar to Ukrainian folk as she lived there for a long time. Additionally, she lived in Estonia, where her mother married an Estonian and Anna herself still feels “Estonian”, whereas Inga inherited the commitment to Fang Shui, Asian culture and the Buddhist religion after living in Kenya and visiting Nepal.

In the context of multiculturalism the process of negotiating transnational identity becomes complex and engages the elements of status, ethnicity and race. The formation of identity and its negotiation consists of three elements:

- 1) Emotional (the influence of nationality, dual belonging, citizenship);
- 2) Visibility of appearance (being radicalized – being black or white, possessing multiple nationalities);
- 3) The influence of names and the way they express transnational lives and retain their diaspora belonging through their names, languages and individual fashion style.⁴

The factor of names plays an important role in the identification of Russian women by Finnish society and defines their Russian identity. Moreover, the Russian language in which these names are pronounced also reveals the ethnic belonging. Thus, negotiating identity is not

⁴ Osazee, U. (2014). *Places in the heart, locations of homeliness: Identifying with family through narratives of nationality, home, and belonging*, course “Transnational anthropology”, Lecture, the University of Tampere, Linna, 08.04.2014

only about physical visibility – if you have black skin or it is indicated in passport that you are Russian, it does not mean that a person cannot speak Finnish or identify her/himself as Finnish.

Furthermore, the media, the Internet and television play a certain role in the popularization of the cultural images and, especially in Russia the promotion of a glamorous lifestyle.

TV programmes are of particular importance – they promote how to dress, what colours you have to wear, what make up you have to have and what length the heels has to be. Russian stylists mostly borrow the images and styles from the West. This research has provided me with the possibility to reflect upon the opinions of the host communities on immigrants' position and immigrants themselves with corresponding topics of stereotypes, stigma, race, collective memory (in a historical context) and other important aspects. Thus, I think the media helps to form the identities of migrants, although sometimes these identities may be falsified or stereotyped.

Due to this, Russian women usually spend a great deal of time and effort in order to present themselves in a way that they think is more beautiful and glamorous. They are eager to show that they are the epitome of the feminine image, from the clothes to the makeup, to the heels, these are important for them. Furthermore, they must combine two roles, that of a beautiful woman and a strong worker.

It is clear to recognise the logic of Russian women and their need for feminine self-realization, in contrast to Finnish women who possess a different type of femininity. It could be because they are compensating for the lack of opportunities for self-expression during the Soviet times. The wish for a more vivid expression of femininity may be considered as a peculiar trait of Russian women. It is important to discuss the Soviet background for the formation of the gender order, in relation to the current gendered practices of Russian women.

“We fought for “a place in the sun””

The reasons for why Russian women move to Finland were listed in the beginning of the chapter. However, when attempting to look for a connection in the choice of the country of residence by Russian women, is much like looking for a needle in a haystack. The motivations of women were certainly varied and depended on their social background, economical status, upbringing, education, and character. For some, Finland was a good option for the perspective of obtaining social welfare and providing a good future for their children, for a few they had

the aim of obtaining citizenship from European country, for others it was an opportunity to find love, and for the rest it was a spontaneous decision to move to Finland.

As Charsley (2013) noted earlier migration studies neglected family migrants, as they were considered as tied to the spouse residing in the destination and economically dependent. Thus, the motivations for immigration were primarily marked as motivations of economic gain and mobility (p.7). However, this statement contradicts the experiences of Russian interlocutors, during the interviews and the observation process I discovered that their wish to be independent financially from their Finnish husbands was strong. Some of the women abandoned their work and families in order to start a new life in Finland, however it turned out that to start a new life in a new country is not easy.

For example, for Lyudmila, who was born in Saint Petersburg and was doing work connected with children clubs and organized concert trips abroad and who met her Finnish husband in the ship cruise the marriage with a Finn was painful. She was subjected to domestic violence; however, she confessed that she tolerated his attitude for several years as she wanted to obtain Finnish citizenship. She abandoned her work in Russia where she was paid well to move to Finland, and she confessed that she is afraid to go back to Russia, as she is ashamed. Nor does she want to be a burden for her children.

Some of my respondents treated the reason of obtaining a residence permit upon move to Finland as negative or normal:

[D: What do you think about women who marry a country?

S: When a women marries a country and a man, she still choses. It is important that a woman has to have this internal strength, and if there is no strength, then women obeys like women in Russia do. When you come here, firstly it seems that everything is alright, but the problems with the language and the dependence on the husband starts later. There should be strength in women.] [Slava, 44]

Slava is 44 years old, divorced and has two children, the son is twenty-five years old and daughter is seven years old. She looked Russian and it was possible to feel that she had a lot of life experience and that her life was not easy. Svetlana was born in Petrozavodsk, Karelia. She was raised by her grandmother, according her words; she always was full of complexes as everybody labeled her as “orphan” as her mother died, although her father was alive. She said that she never had an aim to have a family, she had been in relationships many times but she did not have a family, but she wanted to have children. That is why one day she decided to find a man and to have a child from him, despite not being married (she did not set her aim to have a family or marry a foreigner). She was working in a small shop and she met *him* there.

At that time she was 37 years old and the man was about 58. Then she decided to invite him for the evening and as she confessed she put the box of alcohol on the table (she also underlined several times that she never regret to feed people and give presents to everybody). She told me that she worked a lot and never had financial problems. She was motivated because of her poor childhood and she wanted to compensate it. She has been married three times. She did not have an aim to go to Finland, but she got pregnant from a Finnish man, as still she wanted to have a child from a foreigner. The doctors had given a poor diagnosis for the child, as both parents were old for childbirth. Nevertheless the child was born healthy. Slava lived for 3,5 years with Finnish husband and after that she could not stand him and they became divorced. She also underlined that he was torturing her emotionally for three years and he did not want to marry her for the reason of the doctor's predictions about newborn ill child.

Still, Slava underlined that when a woman chooses to “marry a country” (in case if a woman is driven by the aim of citizenship and economic gain) still, it cannot be characterized purely by the aim of benefit. She claimed that it is mixed with love and the personal choice of husband, as women looks at men, she can like or dislike his look and appearance, mental qualities and so on. She evaluates him and does not get married fast. In her turn, Katerina, 34, noted that she was against marriage the purpose of which was move to Finland, she underlined that natural relationships were better.

Thus, we could see from the extracts of the interviews Russian women characterize the aim of the marriage with a foreign spouse as the aim of obtaining citizenship of Finland differently (negatively and positively). But Russian women perceive these motivations as negative; however, very often they use marriage as a way in order to obtain citizenship as well. In case of Russian women who obtain a Finnish citizenship, they still are allowed to retain their Russian citizenship, which leads to the dual citizenship. The dual citizenship bears the transnational perspective as a core element, which could be characterized as a threat for the sovereign nation-states who try to limit transnational migration (Kearny, 1995, pp. 548-550). That probably has its roots in the past times when Finland tried to recover its own sovereign position after the long influence of the Russian (Soviet) empire. However, today the perceptions of Russian migrants by Finns still carry a negative shadow, especially in the media (Shesternina, 2006, online; Sloveckii, 2011, online; www.slavia.ee, online).

For example, Faist claimed “the transnational identities, border-crossings and mixed political orders suggested by dual citizenship / nationality can be posed either as contributing to, or

hindering, the integration of newcomers” (in Vertovec, 2009, p.91-92). Such arguments are taken up by Hansen and Weil (2002), who discuss arguments against dual citizenship and its ability to produce competing loyalties for the migrants (p.277).

It is interesting how Russian women in Finland define themselves as having the dual citizenship of Russia and Finland. One of my friends (she was not regarded as an official interlocutor), a 23 years girl, born in Russia, Siberia, migrated to Finland with her mother at the age of 8 when her mother married a Finn. After 15 years of living in Finland she was hesitating to answer on my question if she considered herself as Finnish or Russian. Thus she answered that she does not know who she was.

Piper and Roces (2004) underlined the importance of the connection between states and citizenship, and interpret it as important (p.15): “Being a noncitizen, either married to a citizen or not, puts any migrant in a vulnerable relation to the state. The receiving state treats immigration matters as a system of laws, regulations and practices by which it is decided who can live within a territory under what conditions, as documented or undocumented.” (ibid.). Additionally, Piper and Roces claim that often immigration policies and regulations are considered as gendered and it results in the neglecting of the female immigrant’s status, automatically defining her as dependent on her foreign spouse (ibid.). They also develop an important idea of interconnection of marriage and migration that are linked to citizenship and power possessed by law: “... immigration legislature is not just gendered; it is also based upon certain notions of the family, especially within the institutional setting of marriage.” (ibid.).

A vicious circle: from the ship tourist to the house worker

The experience and motivations of Lyudmila, has been described partially in the previous section. I would like to refer to her story as a polar opposite example of being married to a Finnish husband in contrast to the experiences of other interlocutors, who were quite happy in the Russian-Finnish marriage.

We met on Wednesday in October around 11 a.m. in a shopping centre in Tampere. Again, I recognized her as a Russian woman very fast. I asked Lyudmila if it was possible to record the interview, however as she was in the process of divorcing her husband and she did not want to risk as she was going to obtain Finnish residence permit.

She said that in children’s opinion, Finland is not a place where they would like to live. So she visits and keeps in contact with them in Russia and often visits her grandchildren in Saint Petersburg. Again, Lyudmila, met her Finnish husband in ship cruise, and she said that she

already heard something about Finns, but she would prefer to date with a Swedish man. It is worth noticing that Lyudmila had an aim of marrying a foreigner. She started to travel; mainly in ship cruises in Scandinavia. I looked at the responses of Russian women and men in the Internet about such types of cruises, they characterized it as “breathtaking” (*zakhvatyvayushche*)⁵. What is more interesting, the majority of responses also were left by women. Six months after the wedding day, the problems this Russian-Finnish family began. Lyudmila confessed that the husband started to treat her as a cleaner, cooker and he behaved vulgar towards her. She said that they did not have intimate relationships anymore and she became financially dependent on husband. After a while her husband started to drink and partially lost his work. She confirmed that in general Finns become passive and do not fear the loss of their job as they know that the government will support them and there is no need to work hard. Her husband had a *sairaalla loma (disability leave)* for two months, and he was content with the situation, his future and the lack of money. In October 2013 she attempted to get a statement of property division, but still he disturbed her constantly and made her pay half of the rent. Besides the lack of wish of the Finnish husband to work and take care of Lyudmila, she also experienced domestic violence from him. He was drinking and had relationships with other women (including Russian women).

Once he broke her arm by accident when he was drunk. Other cases of violence happened to her later. I asked her why she did not go to the police or sheltering and she responded: “I had to, I had to”. It could be because she did not want to demonstrate the problems to the authorities (lack of trust), as she was ready to obtain the residence permit of Finland and it was a long time she was waiting for that. She emphasized several times that some women cannot stand being insulted all the time and they just divorce. Furthermore, she said that Finnish man always express anger towards Russian women.

It is no wonder that she would feel like this after some years of living in such conditions a person may lose subjectivity. Lyudmila told me that she had a feeling that she and her husband just did not have common topics and he was talking only about money and he was aggressive most of the time, although he was buying different things for himself constantly. She was financially dependent on her husband. During our interview Lyudmila cried several times. For me whilst listening to her story it was important to maintain my neutrality and subjectivity

⁵ <http://www.tury.ru/> (2009) *Отзыв по Скандинавии, Скандинавия, Tallink Silja Serenade круиз. Корабль; Responses for Scandinavia, Scandinavia, Tallink Silja Serenade crouise ship; Available from: http://www.tury.ru/otzyv/id/79889-skandinaviya-skandinaviya-tallink-silja-serenade-kruiz-korabl-zazhigatelno*

whilst also being empathetic to encourage her to continue talking in a safe and friendly atmosphere.

This comes from the important notion of self-reflexivity in anthropology; the issue of immersion and reflexivity of the ethnographer in the field also one of the central discussions in the area of anthropological tradition. Self-reflexivity is one of the important components during the fieldwork for the ethnographer despite the fact that it has a contradictory character for the scholars in the light of subjectivity and objectivity. Lyudmila's case is one of the exceptional cases; her personal experience cannot be applied to all Finnish men. I also was surprised when Ludmila started to talk about the cases of domestic violence, before all three interviews didn't mention it and the previous marriages were described as peaceful and calm. I regard this case as a negative and I do not generalize, thus, referring to the conventional traditions of ethnography in anthropology.

Nevertheless, returning to the idea of dependence and the acquired status of domestic worker Lyudmila told me that she had a higher social status in Russia and earned more than 1000 euro per month there. Today, she regrets that she abandoned her work there. Thus it comes down to choice, whether or not a woman wants to lose her status in exchange for marriage to a foreigner.

Returning to the idea of Piper and Roces (2004) about the connection of marriage, migration and citizenship I would like to underline once again the problem of dependence of immigrant women on their foreign spouses. They claimed immigration policies and regulations are considered as gendered and it results in the neglecting of the female immigrant's status, automatically defining her as dependent on her foreign spouse (p.15).

McKay (in Piper and Roces, 2004) regarded the cases of domestic workers from the Philippines, who migrate in Europe and settle there. In her description of the experiences of the immigrant Filipina women she refers to their colonial histories, which according to her "contextualize personal desires, creating narratives of transnational romance" (Piper and Roces, 2004, p.30). She claimed that Filipina women form their identities within colonial histories that reinforce the privilege vision of Americanized modernity and image of romantic love (ibid.). Thus, they see American men as good provider, romantic lover so distinct from Filipino men. In the author's opinion Filipinas are considered as traditional women, supposedly uncorrupted by the feminism of the West (Piper and Roces, 2004, p.30).

There is a connection to be made between the experiences of Filipina women and the case of Russian women living with a Finnish husband it is not rare that Russian women combine two roles simultaneously – a role of wife and domestic worker.

Some interlocutors confessed they did not anticipate that their Finnish husbands would consider them domestic workers. For some of them it caused indignation and a conflict situation in their transnational couples.

From the words of the interlocutors it is possible to recognize the indications of manipulation from the side of Finnish men. Here I refer particularly to the image of Russian women as domestic workers in the view of Finnish men. It is still a question why Finnish husbands perceive Russian wives as potential domestic workers or housewives. I connect it mainly with the stereotypes about women's role in Russia (and in the East in general) and gender differences in both countries of Finland and Russia which are revealed in this work.

McKay (in Piper and Roces, 2004) also stated that domestic work is often seen as the set of naturally feminine skills and dispositions; it is usually unpaid and provides a set of free services exchanged between spouses in marriage. "Since a good wife is a good (domestic) worker, a hard-working, yet feminine, woman makes a good wife." (p.30). The author also claimed that these household duties which women undertakes can be interpreted by men as the expression of marital duties (ibid.).

The image of traditional role of Russian wife, so successfully supported by gender stereotypes, also creates a perfect ground for vision of Russian women as a domestic worker. Probably, it is partially connected with the lack of knowledge that Finnish men possess regarding the real status of Russian woman in Russia and also communication with Russian women, of the particular group (for instance, those, who intentionally look for foreign husbands).

Lyudmila went on to illustrate the difference between Finnish women and Russian women, she noted that Finns are looking for Russian wives because they know that Finnish women are independent enough and they will not clean and cook in a way Russian women do it. Thus, Finnish men consider them as servants, cleaners, cooks and prostitutes; she noted that they lost respect for Russian women. But, again, there should be clear understanding of the rational and objective approach to the experiences of individuals.

McKay stated that: "Where women are domestic workers, their future partners can quickly come to identify them with domestic space and all the stereotypes that this identification might imply. Doing domestic work may appear to infantilize women, making part of their romantic

appeal a perception of their “helplessness” in the public space of their receiving society.” (p.31). However in the case of Filipina women they are aware of the stereotypes about themselves and their roles by their husbands (ibid). That contradicts with the case of Russian women who usually do not anticipate to be labelled as a domestic worker. McKay concluded that it leads to the situation when a foreign spouse combines the domestic skills with necessary marital merits and duties of woman (ibid).

“Border artists”

Russian women who migrate to Finland and adapt to new cultural, social, behavioural settings can be characterized as “border artists”, a term developed by Ulrich Beck:

“In order to survive, the average (im)migrant must become an artiste of the border (slipping under the border, using the border, setting the border, bridging the border etc.), and he or she can fall from the high wire of border use on which he or she is balancing.” (Beck, 2007, p. 695).

The daily experiences of women, their everyday practices change upon the move to Finland as well. It concerns not only emotional and mental changes but practical and material as well – for instance Inga, 62, decided to buy a dishwasher machine, a washing machine and to end with her household duties.

As we can see Russian women, upon the move to Finland they discover new livelihood possibilities, and for this interlocutor, who has her Soviet background in the past and upon the move to the western, “civilized” Finland she fulfilled her longstanding needs. It is also necessary to mention the cultural changes and mental changes which take place, as Slava claimed that she catches the mentality in Finland and when she comes to Russia something is different.

I would say that Russian women ended up in Finland long ago are different from their Russian compatriots. After some time of living in a foreign country their perception of life changes, as do their morals and way of thinking, thus it results in a change of the identity of these Russian women. Slava told me that for three years while staying in Finland she was back to Russia from time to time, and she confessed that now she feels herself more comfortable in Finland and when she comes to Russia many things and the behaviour of people shock her as well. For instance she described the case with the bus in Russia, when the old man got in the bus and asked the driver about bus station, as he could not find it in the schedule and a woman yelled at him and it was a scandal, she confessed she was absolutely shocked. She underlined

the positives of living in Finland – it is about society, moral ethics, culture, etc. Here it is possible to refer to the notion of *supranational identity* Russian women acquire after living in Finland. It means that perceptions of the things change in the views of individuals. It also means that they can be ‘here’ and ‘there’ and in different contexts respondents have different senses about themselves (Goulbourne et al., 2010, p.114). Furthermore, the changes were expressed in the outer appearances of Russian women living in Finland and their ironic attitude to the glamour style so popular in Russia. I think that this aspiration of irony was dictated by the wish to identify themselves with the Finnish women in order not to be so visible in their Russian appearance. I believe it is partly connected with the stereotypical images about Russian women in the Finnish media where they are mostly represented as prostitutes or easy women (Shesternina, 2006, online; Helsingin Sanomat, 2005, online).

Culture as a “repertoire”

Steven Vertovec (2009) defined transnationalism as a type of consciousness or the process of cultural reconstruction. The author regarded transnationalism from another angle – from the perspective of culture, what reflects more about people’s life experiences. He attempted to reduce the attention for the traditional transnational migration perspective. I see the reflection of his approach in my interlocutors’ experiences and practices. In their transnational lives the migrants are supposed to cope with various ranges of cultural differences that could be expressed in development of new forms of the habitus mentioned before in the work (Vertovec, 2009, p.69). Experiences, skills, and information - all these aspects help migrants to adapt in new living conditions, and as Vertovec and Cohen (in Vertovec) underlined, it is often connected to the notion of the “cosmopolitanism” which underpins my viewpoint (ibid, p. 70). Being cosmopolitans in the conditions of the transnational experiences, the migrants are able to possess openness for the cultural practices. Besides, it refers to the mutual expectations of both sides of the transnational marriage, when a person is ready to accept other cultural practices despite her own habits. In connection with that, Hannerz (1990) stated that “managing multiplicity” is a proper way of approaching cultures (p. 239).

How do migrants manage with that? Ann Swidler (2001) considered *culture as a “repertoire”*, which provides a set of skills that he or she implies in day-to-day action (pp.24-25). It is similar to Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* mentioned before. In connection with that Russian women being in Finland may engage in the everyday activities by selecting particular cultural elements and negotiate them with particular life circumstances. Below I provide the example of misunderstandings of Finnish sets of cultural traditions, characteristics and meanings.

[For example, the brother of the husband visited us. He called us before, we said “Okay, come, but we are short of money now and we do not have much to eat so please bring something”, and so he brought pizza only for himself. I am sure you know Russian women...I immediately found a piece of meat in the freezer and cooked several dishes – you know that Russians can cook a lot with nothing. So he came and he ate his pizza and our food as well. And we were shocked, and I decided not to remain silent and said: “You know, people should share food”. He was embarrassed. There are no close trustful relationships. And this brother, what do you think? - He asked at the end: “May I take the leftovers with me?” Can you imagine my reaction? There is no great heartedness (*shirota dushi*⁶). The country is more expensive and all of them they...] [Nina, 51].

In this part Nina who immediately marked us both as *zemlyaki*,⁷ as she knew I was from Yaroslavl, told me a lot of about Finnish mentality. However the fact that she recognized me as *zemlyak* helped us both in finding common topics and the tension of the trust went away.

Her adaptation in Finland was not so cheerful. She has a daughter who is twenty-one and who learnt Finnish fast in contrast to Nina. She shared that she felt lonely in Finland upon her arrival. She underlined several times that when she travels back to Russia and passes the border “she feels at home”, she feels calm. She says that she misses her old friends from Russia and that new friends are about “a different matter”. She claimed that Russians are more hospitable and share food and goods more easily. She used the idiom *shirota dushi* which describes Russians in a precise way. In Russia it is more possible that the guest would bring and leave something for the hosts – presents or food he bought. Another notion, mentioned by another interlocutor Inga, 62, called the factor of *zadushevnost* (or *razgovor po dusham*):

[You know, it is a West thing, not only Finnish. Generally *zadushevnost* is not accepted here. So soul-to-soul. It is not appropriate to complain here.] [Inga, 62]

However, Inga considered these “rule” of Finnish and Western cultures as positive, as she claimed about impolite Russians who share by their own moral problems too much with other people. Still, some interlocutors confessed that they feel a lack of *zadushevnost* in communication.

Another example of Galina clearly demonstrates this. Being married with a Finnish husband and separated from her family in Kazan, she feels a sharp need in communicating with *zemlyakami* and a need for their cultural representation in different forms, including cooking traditions and chatting. She claimed that she would like to bake a cake, a *national* one.

⁶ Old Russian phrase about hospitality, kindness, which can be expressed in two words – “*shirota dushi*” or great heartedness (the wideness (kindness) of soul). It is typical Russian idiomatic expression.

⁷ It means people from the same land (*compatriot, fellow-countryman*).

The notion of nostalgic images of “home” is rather vivid in the interviews. The symbolic meaning Russian immigrant women apply to different range of things includes language, images, music, clothes and food – as a national cake in the example of Galina. This nostalgia connects them with their Russian “homes”, maintaining of the feeling of belonging and their Russian identity.

It is well known that in Finnish culture a visit to *sauna* is considered practically as a sacrament ritual. In Russia there is analogue of the Finnish sauna called *banya*. The difference is that more often people go there dressed in swimming suits, however it depends. The main difference there is the presence of *venik* (bath-broom) by which you are beaten. It is considered as useful for health as *veniks* are made of different kinds of branches of leafs bound together (Russian Banya, online). There even some proverbs were created about Russian *banya*: *Bánya - mat' vtoráya* (The banya is like a second mother), *V báne pomýlsya — zánovo rodílsya* (Washing up in the banya is like being born again.), *“V báne vénik dorózhe déneg”* (A bath-broom in the banya is worth more than money) (Russian Banya, online). In this case there are evident similarities between two cultures – Finnish and Russian, but still Galina felt uncomfortable even thinking about going to the sauna with other people naked. In Finnish culture it is rather common to spend time with friends or colleagues in sauna being naked, it is even common for both sexes. For Galina however this can be explained by her Muslim roots of origin, which determine such behaviour as unacceptable. In Galina’s case, negotiating this cultural difference with her husband was difficult and it led to conflict between them. Thus, in this case it was challenging for her to adopt the cultural peculiarities and meanings, as well as for her husband to understand hers. Here the notion of *culture as repertoire* seems failed in terms of inability of both spouses to find a compromise that would prevent the conflict.

This extracts are evidences of the wish of the Russian women resided in Finland to maintain their own cultural identities and emotional attachment to Russian customs and styles of communication despite the aspirations of being similar to the members of the host society. I believe this balance – the maintenance of eradication of evident foreignness and still natural aspiration to their native cultural self-realization (baking cakes, chatting, making concerts, etc.) is not an easy task for Russians residing in Finland and other western countries. It, sometimes, may result in their isolation and separation from both communities. Hence, the migrants attempt to manage in the way mentioned before, where culture (I would say even both-Russian and Finnish) is represented as a *repertoire* which is exposed to the modification of skills, cultural views and practice in everyday behaviour.

It is worth noting that the cultural behaviour of the members of the host countries varies. There is a question of personal character, upbringing and social background of the individual. As the case mentioned by Nina above, when the Finnish brother ate everything, cannot serve as a general example. Even her Finnish husband was surprised by this fact, which tells us about the obvious differences in the behaviour of two Finns. Social reality in general is a vague phenomenon and making generalizations would be not appropriate, however the importance of the particular cases is incontestable.

“Cultural starvation”

Opposite to Galina’s experience and inability to negotiate cultural practices and own cultural assumptions Inga seemed rather opened to new things. Inga has a Finnish husband, they have been married for 28 years, and she is very happy in her marriage. She was born in Leningrad⁸ into a family of intellectuals and met her Finnish husband in 1983, while working in a hotel for foreign guests called *Intourist* in Leningrad. Later she called this place “tasty”, meaning that during the Soviet times mobility and travelling abroad was restricted and nobody was allowed to be in contact with foreigners except hotel workers, academics, politicians and prostitutes.

She applied there for a job intentionally as she confessed that she wanted to find a reliable father for her little daughter from the West. She said that she started to look at the West and she did not imagine that she could marry on a Russian man.

She described her marriage as absolutely happy and noted several times that she has a particular moral position – she is independent and does not want to make anybody follow her advices. She possesses a very interesting personality. She is fond of Feng Shui and her flat is arranged in this style. In Tampere she has a lot of Finnish friends and Russian as well. When I came to her for the interview, she prepared sweets and tea, and wanted to make me feel at home and I sat on the big comfortable couch while she was sitting opposite in the armchair absolutely relaxed and obviously confident.

Upon her arrival in Finland and her marriage to a Finnish husband she still could not travel back to the Soviet Union to visit her relatives. They used tourist visas and invitations from the relatives, reserved a hotel in Leningrad and then went to their homes. They were treated as outsiders, enemies in their country of origin.

⁸ The city was re-named, today it is Saint Petersburg

Inga confessed that she felt the *kulturnii golod* (*cultural starvation*) in Finland at first, it is obvious that Inga had a social background which was very socially and culturally-rich.

Being brought up in Leningrad means that a person possesses a set of particular cultural meanings, experiences and impressions about different cultures as well (as Leningrad still was visited by foreigners although with restrictions). Thus, I believe it contributed to the formation of Inga's personality and her open-mindedness in relation to other cultures, cultural meanings, and practices. The vivid contrast between her way of life in Leningrad and city of Huittinen resulted in *kulturnii golod* (*cultural starvation*) for Inga. It means that she felt lack of communication because she did not speak Finnish, the density of population was smaller in contrast to her native city, and she felt bored because of the absence of hobbies and general peaceful, albeit passive atmosphere there. Moreover, she was not able to find work again, because she lacked fluency in the Finnish language. Inga's case also could be interpreted in terms of *habitus*, a concept, developed by Bourdieu (1977, 1990). When the socialization of immigrants and family life take place across two or more settings (in case of Russian women both countries of Finland and Russia), it is usual that the migrants' stories of mobility, adaptation and integration have their own scenarios. After leaving the place of origin the process of adaptation in the host country begins. It means that the "cosmopolitan individual" who crossed borders and located her in a new place, is supposed to adapt to the conditions and cultural practices of the host society. From my point of view it supposes, that there is emotional and cultural exchange with the host society, as we observe in the examples of Russian interlocutors. However, the conception is too abstract and in connection to transnationalism it demands more clarity. For instance Guarnizo (1997) interpreted the concept of habitus in the transnational context as:

"A particular set of dualistic dispositions that inclines migrants to act and react to specific situations in a manner that can be, but is not always, calculated, and that is not simply a question of conscious acceptance of specific behavioral or sociocultural rules... The transnational habitus incorporates the social position of the migrant and the context in which transmigration occurs." (Guarnizo, 1997, p. 311).

It means that the migrants persistently compare the livelihoods practices, conditions and challenges of their 'host' country with the 'home' country. For example, many of my interlocutors compared their living experiences in the contexts of Russia and Finland.

Thus, there is a contradiction with the notion of transnationalism, as the dual belonging in the consciousness of the migrants or which scholars define by scholars as '*bifocality*' (Vertovec,

2004, p.20). However some of Russian interlocutors were very mobile and also regarded other countries – Ukraine, Estonia, and Kenya as part of their transnational experiences and *mobile livelihoods*. What supports the idea of transnationalism? Vertovec (2004) referred to Rouse in characterization of bifocality: “...bifocalism stemmed not from transitional adjustments to a new locale, but from a chronic, contradictory transnationalism.” (ibid.). There is an important thought how migrants maintain their bifocal social ties and views of both societies (ibid.).

It is clearly conveyed in the case of Russian women in Finland, that their migration was more often motivated by different reasons – marriage, education, or labour migration. For Russian male migrants migrating the causes of migration are usually for business, or labour migration. Thus, in the case of marriage migration, the conditions of living in the foreign family of the husband, a woman may feel the duality of belonging in two different places.

Nonetheless, despite that, Inga adapted herself to the new conditions of living, negotiating her own practices, skills and habits. Later she asked her husband to buy a flat for her and moved to Tampere. After living in Finland for 30 years she confessed that if person moves to a foreign country, it is her/his duty to accept the culture of the host society.

Thus, it is possible to observe the difference in the practices of Russian women for adaptation to the culture of the host country. I would say that the social backgrounds of women have a significant influence as well on their perceptions of the cultural practices. As we could see the examples of Galina and Inga are different. For Galina it is more challenging to adapt to the culture while for Inga the process of learning was “sweet”. Consequently, the idea of culture as a *repertoire* and the need to change their cultural practices is closely intertwined with notions of integration and adaptation in transnationalism studies.

The process of the *adaptation* of migrants to new contexts is marked by different terms: *assimilation, integration, settlement, insertion* etc. (Vertovec, 2009, p.78). Certainly not all migrants are able to adapt and engage successfully in transnational life and could still retain links to the places of their origins. Moreover their integration can be challenged by various factors – for example by the states’ immigration policies, the status of migrant, and classification of migration they choose (labour migration, marriage migration, etc.). Often migrants develop their own homogeneous communities where they feel themselves more adapted and sometimes these communities are formed in the whole diasporas. However, I do not regard the concept of diasporas. I maintain that in the case of Russian migrants the communities play a significant role.

In Tampere, the Russian Club has been developed for several years. The club gives the Russian migrants opportunities to participate in different events; it supports many activities and contributes to the comfortable integration of recently arrived migrants. Yet, it is not sponsored or supported by any official bodies - the Russian community provides funding. In the interviews interlocutors expressed a great deal respect for the club and said its activities are very important for newcomers.

The notion of transnationalism is not new in migration studies. However, still the definition needs to be clarified, when it is regarded as detached from the multidisciplinary discourse (context). Scholars claim that the notion of transnationalism is defined in practice – in the everyday life of migrants and not only in theory. During the recent shift in the interpretation of transnationalism, this change also happened in the perception of immigrants - they are not marked as ‘anomalies’ anymore (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, pp. 3-4). Not only is the elite considered cosmopolitan today, but ordinary people as well. It leads us to the notions of transnationalism “from above” and “from below”.

I regard Russian female immigrants as actors belonged to the transnationalism “from below”. In the transnational perspective, the changes in practices of immigrants also touch upon family and gender practices. In my research, the focus on the family is especially significant and it is important to trace the impact of the transnationalism on it. In the conditions of transitional moves, the immigrants also encounter different cultural differences and their transnational lives are formed in the new conditions of habitus.

To sum up, this chapter was devoted to the notion of transnationalism and to important theoretical conceptions, which reveal the understanding of transnational processes and experiences of immigrants. In this part, I also describe Russian interlocutors with whom I met and discussed their experiences. I attempt to portray their appearances and styles, which retain indications of their Russian ethnicity. The Russian media has a big impact on the formation of Russian women appearances and styles, and their identities as well. The formation of *identity* is a significant issue in the transnational life. In this chapter, I also considered the motivations of women for move to Finland. Being neighbouring country of Russia, Finland is different in many areas – social, cultural, economic, political and emotional, but still, Finland attracts Russian women and inspires them to emigrate. In migration studies the motivations of women for move abroad especially to the West, were often regarded from the point of view of economic gain and aspiration for mobility. In the case of Russian female immigrants the widespread stereotypical image of motivations is connected with the obtaining citizenship.

Additionally, Russian female immigrants resided in Finland and married with Finns are very often regarded as domestic workers, especially in unsuccessful marriages.

Chapter 4 Finland and Russia – between History and Anthropology

As my research is focused on the study of Finnish - Russian transnational families, this part will describe some of the important ideas of perception of both nationalities, their mutual perceptions of people and culture. In order to understand the attitudes of Finns to Russians there is a need to focus on the analysis of the historical development and ideologies in political, social and cultural contexts. Moreover, the migration trends and the border cooperation measures in the 20th century are important indicators of the character of relations between two countries.

“Don't cross the bridge till you come to it”.

There are approximately 25,000 Russians living in Finland, settled in different parts of Finland, in province as well, but mostly, they live in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and neighbouring regions (Niemi, 2007, online). The majority of Russians of working age and the number of women who immigrate to Finland is bigger than men as it has been mentioned before. In 2006 the percentage rate constituted 61 percent of all Russian immigrants (ibid.).

Lähtenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski stated that the migration of Russian population to Finland happened in four migratory ways (in Blommaert, et al., 2012, p.121). This population was divided in two groups – “Old Russians” and “New Russians” (ibid.). The ancestors of Old Russians already made a step on Finnish land in 18th century, with the following location in areas of Karelia (ibid.). The second wave happened during the times of Finland as an autonomous part of Russia and included merchants, soldiers and other immigrants (ibid.). The refugee flow happened during the October Revolution in 1917 which was considered as the third migratory wave (ibid.). The fourth wave of migration included “New Russians”, the most recent immigrants, who migrated after the times of soviet perestroika mentioned before (ibid.).

I think that the cultural and emotional perceptions of Finns and Russians are predetermined by the history of Finnish-Russian relationships. The status of Finland as a Grand Duchy of Russia for a long time, the Winter War, the Continuation War and post-war period relationships are the preconditions for “othering” the Russians. Some my interlocutors confessed that sometimes they prefer not to speak the Russian language or to demonstrate their belonging. Despite the active development of border cooperation and in the sphere of migratory polices,

Finland still maintains “distance” with Russia, although supporting the partnership in the spheres of economy, trade and cultural exchange.

“We are not Swedes, and do not want to become Russians, therefore let us be Finns”⁹

Prejudices towards to Russians are not new in Finland, but derived from the common history of both countries (Lähteenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski in Blommaert, et al., 2012, p.123). Finland is a young state that was exposed to Swedish domination for 500 years and then to Russian for 100 years (ibid.). It gained independence in 1917.

For most of the period of Russian domination, Finland was an autonomous part which had its own “voice” – it had its own parliament, currency, arms and so on (Lewis, 2005, p. 30-31). Moreover the Finnish language was spoken and Finnish soldiers served in the Russian Imperial Army (ibid.). Russia tried not to influence the self-determination of the Finnish people due to Russian’s interest in Finland and the czar, Alexander I treated Finns with respect (Lewis, 2005, p. 28).

However, after a while the national feelings became stronger in Finland what was connected with a threat to Finnish culture and security in general (Lähteenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski Blommaert, et al., 2012, p.123). In general, Finns remained politically neutral to Russia during 19th century (Lewis, 2005, p. 30).

Already in 1860 Russians marked the establishment of the Finnish own currency as separate (Lewis, 2005, p. 29). The periods of ‘*Russification*’ followed in the reign of Czar Nicholas II from 1899-1905 and 1909-1917 (ibid.). As the result in 1917 Finland gained its independence after October Revolution (Lähteenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski in Blommaert, et al., 2012, p.123; Lewis, 2005, p. 32).

Another remarkable period in Finnish – Russian relationships happened in 1939 during the Winter War when Russia took ten per cent of Finnish territory (Lewis, 2005, p. 37; Lähteenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski in Blommaert, et al., 2012, p.123). The aggression of Russia was underpinned by the undetermined behaviour of Finland towards Russia in conditions of German expansion, which Finns could use for the aims of revenge (Lewis, 2005, p. 37). The Continuation War followed the Winter War, when Finland was hesitating which side to take - German or Soviet (ibid). On the one hand Finland wanted revenge on Russia; on the other hand the “lessons” of the past did not allow engage in a conflict with Russia. All that

⁹ Adolf Ivar Arwidsson

resulted in the peace treaty in September 1944 with Russia and measures against German troops resided on Finnish territory.

During these times the majority of people were forced to move and sent abroad. Anna told me about experiences of her parents at those times as well.

The last peace treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the end of this war was signed in 1948 (Lähteenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski in Blommaert, et al., 2012, p.124). The refugee problem bears particular importance. In those times many people fled from Karelia to Finland and refused a Russian passport (Lewis, 2005 p.39).

Then '*Finlandization*' followed with the loyal relationships from both parts and Finland's promises to perform the role of the "third party" in the event of a possible conflict of Russia with other countries (Lewis, 2005, p. 40). During the period of Cold War Finland kept its neutrality and at the same time strengthened its own political, cultural and economic spheres (ibid.).

Finnish national self-consciousness has always been challenged by their common history with Sweden and Russia (Lähteenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski in Blommaert, et al., 2012, p.124). Fennoman movements were rather spread out and tried to "recover" the "finnishness" against "swedishness" and "russianness" (ibid.). By developing such movements Finns tried to preserve their ethnic, cultural and ethnic identity that was the "driving force" for the folk to believe in the successful nature of Finland as a country.

Emotional border

Austin (1996) pointed out on the emotional element of Finnish –Russian relations connected with the border:

"One can touch it, walk across it and see the sharp differences in culture and living-standards. The border is there, in the back of mind of every Finn. It can cause a wide –range of responses from fear and paranoia to optimism and hope for the future." (Austin, 1996, p. 150)

Here the authors explain the fear and hope, which are dictated by the events of the past and offers promising perspectives of the future in collaboration and cooperation.

Moreover the particular law on the border crossing between Finland and Russia did not exist until 1960 when the problem of refugees from the Soviet Union became an issue (ibid., 160).

Then the fall of the Soviet Union caused the new policies and security measures in the border region with Finland (ibid.). The first border treaties were signed in 1993-1994, this in Finnish logic would allow the border to be more or less transparent, whilst contributing to the flow of people and goods (Austin, 1996, p. 155). It is important to note that Finland still continues the policy of a visa regime with Russia despite all discussions about its cancellation (ibid., p.156). Especially this topic is actively discussed in the media and the Internet (Bogdanov, 2013, online). The obvious reasons for the reluctance of Finland for this step - a possible flood of migrants from the East and threat to the security of the country (Austin, 1996, p. 156). Drug flows and crimes connected with Russians are the obvious reasons for Finns to keep distance in migration regime policies with Russia (ibid.).

Many people are aware of the historical past and are not against the possibility, of some of the lost territory becoming part of Finland again.

However, the Finns themselves still express their indignation about the lost territories in the past:

[And my husband sometimes says: "Would you give back Viborg to us". I respond: "Take it if you can." You must be able to take. I say: "arrange another war and feel how it will be with Saint- Petersburg for instance".] [Sarcasm] [Galina, 54]

Here it is also possible to refer to the collective memory of Finns, which still is called in the memories of the lost territories and unsuccessful experiences of wars. Probably, such "messages" from Finnish people are evidence of their memory, which does not allow them to forget the painful experiences of the past.

In 1990s, 47 per cent of Finns supported the idea of the regain of the lost territories while 44 percent of population regarded it as negative aspiration (Hämäläinen, 2001, online). Additionally, the considerable costs for recovery of the territories and the lack of guarantee that Russian people would agree to move to other regions of Russia make the perspective of regain of the territories vague and hardly possible (ibid.). In connection with that, all the mentioned aspirations of the husbands of my Russian interlocutors still point at the wish of Finns to recover themselves even in territorial matter. Thus, more or less neutral attitude of the public to the question of the recovery of the territories allowed Finnish government to avoid this topic and focus more on the cooperation with Russia in various spheres (Austin, 1996, p. 174).

Border crossings in the XX century and Post-Soviet era

The migration tendencies in Russia changed in the 1970s (Munz and Ohliger, 2003, p.122). The peak of migration happened in 1975 (ibid.). During this time migration was perceived as a negative indication of the lack of patriotism and betrayal of motherland. Inga supported the idea of restricted mobility in the 1990s and the negative attitude from the side of Soviet authorities towards people who migrated abroad.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union people's views on migration have been changed and their hesitation towards migration vanished (Pilkington, 1998, p.4).

From 1990s the amount of visas granted to Russian citizens increased from the times of the Cold War (Austin, 1996, p.170). Since then official Finnish consulates opened in several cities of Russia – Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Murmansk and Petrozavodsk (ibid.). Moreover the former inhabitants of former Finnish Karelia made a huge number of trips to Russia (ibid.). However, despite increased mobility across the border Finnish authorities continued a strict visa policy in attitude to Russian visitors. The business workers, politicians and scientists were granted multiple-entry visas (ibid. p.171). Again, Inga underlined the idea of iron curtain and the only way for contacting foreigners – through work and education.

Finnish-Russian relations, despite the negative lessons of the past in the contemporary period can be characterized in terms of cooperation (Austin, 1996, p. 179). As for Finnish politics regarding border cooperation, it is possible to say that Finland possesses strict border policies (ibid.). However there is a mutual cooperation with Russia in the spheres of trade, tourism and business. As Austin (1996) noted Finland still is concerned about its own identity and ethnical belonging, which they try to save and develop in people, that is why they also attempt to restrict personal contacts (with Russians as well) and save the national homogeneity (p.181). Finns carefully guard historical and cultural heritage from foreign invasion after the past experiences. The policy of Finland is two side of the same coin – on the one hand they want to preserve their identity and on the other hand they wish to engage in the world economic and political process (ibid., p.182). Another reason is the security of the state that can be challenged due to the flow of immigrants.

A particular group of migrants were not restricted for coming to Finland, the Ingrian Finns, and the example of Oksana clearly demonstrates it stating that she left Russia during the period of “sausage emigration” with her husband, who had his Finnish roots.

Why do these people consider themselves as possessing Finnish roots? The matter is that their roots go back to the 17th century, when they settled in the area of the Gulf of Finland (Now

part of the territory of Saint- Petersburg) under the rule of Sweden (Austin, 1996, p. 172). Since 1990 the Finnish president Mauno Koivisto allowed Ingrian Finns to obtain Finnish citizenship, consequently 11,000 Ingrians returned to Finland at this time (ibid.).

Anna, who has parents of Finnish roots, whose relatives live in Sweden and who lived in Estonia, Russia and Ukraine decided to move to Finland in 1995, was pointing out her family's Finnish roots as well. In Anna's example it is obvious that the factor of her and her mother's "Finnish roots" and ethnic belonging played a significant role in the process of obtaining Finnish citizenship. It allowed them to settle in Finland smoothly and as Anna confessed the Finnish authorities helped them with accommodation, furniture and legal procedures.

The migration of educated people from the former Soviet Union to the West became another challenge for the new state (Pilkington, 1998, p.11). The free exit policy implemented by the Soviet Union caused concern surrounding the issue of brain drain to the West (ibid.). Pilkington (1998) claimed that around 3,000 people emigrated from Russia in 1980, and by 1990 the number constituted 104,000 people and in 1995 – 110,000 people (p.11).

During the emigration at the post-Soviet period the different types of Soviet migrants emerged: "the forced migrant", "the refugee", "asylum seeker", "transit migrant", "undocumented, illegal migrant", "labour – migrant", "guest-worker" (Pilkington, 1998, p.12). The author also mentioned the "voluntary" migrants and "repatriates" were considered as similar groups sometimes (ibid.).

In case of my Russian interlocutors their migration is regarded as voluntary. Their reasons for migration have been discussed in previous chapters, and some of them particularly desired to migrate to the West.

Mitchneck and Plane also paid attention to the factor of "economic shock" that happened during the collapse of USSR, they rejected the idea of forced migration and repatriation theories for migration which was the leading thought in those times (in Pilkington, 1998, p.15).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were new challenges of adapting to the new economic conditions, consumption and the new economic agenda (Lewis and Roland in Pilkington, 1998, p.14). Moreover, people were forced to follow job opportunities accordingly even if that meant relocation (ibid.). Industrialization also served as an important factor for the migration trends of people (ibid., p.14).

To conclude, during the process of interviewing, I realized that my research needed a historical perspective as interlocutors constantly mentioned the historical facts and stated that these historical events are still echoed in the mutual perceptions of Finns and Russians. I see the need for the insight of the past of both nations in order to understand the attitudes of Finns and Russians, and not only in the global perspective but in the sphere of family as well. This chapter attempts to underline the idea that the perceptions of Finns and Russians are determined by the history of Finnish-Russian relationships. Such historical events as the Winter War, the Continuation War and post-war period and the status of Finland as a Grand Duchy of Russia served as the causes for the “othering” the Russians. Some of my interlocutors sometimes prefer not to speak Russian in front of Finns and not to demonstrate their ethnic belonging.

The chapter discuss the mutual border crossings between Russia and Finland during the 20th century and even earlier. Nonetheless, returning to the topic of mutual perceptions my interlocutors claimed that Finnish people still retain their collective memory surrounding events of the past. I suppose it is caused by memories of the lost territories and the unsuccessful experiences of wars. Probably, such claims from Finnish people are evidence of their memory, which does not allow the forgetting of past experiences. Despite the common initiatives aimed at the cooperation in the sphere of migration and other areas Finland continues to keep distance in relations with Russia and retains its strict migration policy. It is possible to note, that Finland as the country, which experienced oppression for a long time, is concerned about its identity and ethnicity what makes it to be strict in terms of contact with foreign population as the safety of the national homogeneity bears a particular significance.

Chapter 5 Transnational family: Finnish-Russian context

Transnational Family

This paragraph explains the phenomena of ‘transnational family’. Here I refer to the scholars’ interpretations of the notion of ‘transnational family’ and reveal the notion of ‘family’ in general at first.

Academic scholars and sociologists (Wilson; Fletcher; Parsons) interpreted the notion of family as the core element of social system, explaining the biological factor of reproduction and specific functions performed by the family (in Goulbourne et al., 2010, p.17). In connection with the concept of family, the idea of kinship takes its relevance. It refers us to the idea of networks established by means of biological and legal procedures (marriages) (ibid).

Goulbourne et al. (2010) identified the families in the Eastern part of the world as traditional (ibid). In the case of Russian families, the indications of such traditional order includes the household duties divided between spouses. The woman's part is supposed to include cooking, cleaning and taking care of the children, whilst the man is responsible for building, renovating and earning money (Vuorinen, 2003). Such models of behaviour and the order of household duties, were supported by my interlocutors' experiences and their conceptualizations of family life were similar to the traditional representations of roles (in Russian view).

In migration studies, the notion of 'family' has been neglected. The problematic of transnational experiences in the family perspective has not been precisely clarified. Goulbourne et al. (2010) stated that the concept more often is interpreted as families in which "*members live in different countries but manage to continue to keep in touch with each other*"; however he argued that the concept is too vague (p.4).

In the 1990s the notion of the transnational family was discussed mostly in the light of commodities and capital (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002, p.4). It is necessary to take into consideration such global tendencies as colonialism in past times, division of labor force, trade movements and so on. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) also underlined Cohen's (1997) idea about diasporic space (p. 4-5). But in my work I mostly refer to the experiences of individuals rather experiences of communities, although I reflect on the community of Russians created in Tampere.

The factor of globalization should be taken into account when discussing the transnational practices and experiences of transnational families. Charsley (2012) underlined that the processes of transnational activities are accompanied by the developing communication technologies and mobility possibilities (p.5). It is important to note that the members of these families also deal with the questions of boundaries, issues of race, ethnicity, gender and generation. Moreover they also negotiate such matters as migration, identities, communities, resources and relationships in today's world (Goulbourne et al., 2010, p.3).

In the last few decades, the transnational experience became possible for families irrespective of their social class; however Grillo (2008) stated that a person's transnational experience is shaped by social class (p. 41, p. 234). The author claimed that sometimes the process of assimilation within the host population is difficult for immigrants, which results in formation of ethnic colonies in which "the most significant social, cultural and religious institutions of their homelands began to reappear." (ibid.). "Indigenous reactions varied markedly by social class, especially at the outset". Grillo (2008) continued, stating that for instance the UK

migrants their settlement in particular areas of cities was noticed only by working-class people, most likely by immigrants as well (p.41). However, with the development of studies on the family in migration, the belonging to a particular social class as a precondition for migration was reconsidered. It means that ordinary, non-elite families also were able to be presented as a part of the global society (ibid.). Thus, the focus from the cosmopolitan elite in the perspective of transnational studies shifted to the more intimate level of the family. As in transnational couples members possess specific racial and ethnic traits, thus their alliances result in the emergence of so called “mixed” marriages (Goulbourne et al., 2010, p.9). In the case of Finnish-Russian context the families also are considered also as “mixed”.

In their work “The transnational family: New European Frontiers and Global Networks” (2002) Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela approach transnational families as:

“Families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely, “familyhood”, even across national borders” (p.3).

Goulbourne et al. (2010) challenged the notion and says it is too vague, stating that families within the same nation state could easily come with this definition (p.8).

In her work Charsley (2012) defined transnational alliance as a *cross-border marriage*, which is defined as a marriage where one of the spouses is a migrant and lacks *citizenship status* (ibid., p.24).

Following the transnational perspective, Vertovec defined *cross-border marriage migration* as a “manifestation of the transnationalism ...a condition in which certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common area of activity” (in Charsley, 2012, p.31).

Charsley (2012) defined *marriage-related migration* as the “umbrella term referring to migration in order to marry, to be reunited with a spouse, or other situations in which marriage is significant factor in migration” (ibid., p. 20). Thus, it follows that in some cases the migration of Russian women to Finland may be considered as marriage-related. In turn, marriage-related migration is intertwined with other several important categories: *transnational couples and transnational weddings* – these concepts bear their importance in connection to the conceptualizations of the transnational family (Charsley, 2012, p. 21). *Transnational couples* are defined as couples whose marriages extended across nation-states borders. The celebration of the marriages aimed at involving of members of the families also

left in the places of origin, facilitating their physical presence and their unification is defined as *transnational weddings* (ibid., p.21). Thus, it is possible to trace how the transnational marriage facilitates the reinforcement of the migration of migrants and also their members of the families across borders. It refers us to the idea of chain migration.

Transnational or non-transnational?

To define the theoretical character of marriage between Russian and Finnish spouses was a contradictory task. In the case of Russian women who migrate and stay in Finland and sometimes does not maintain contacts with Russia - the paradigm of *transnational* becomes blurred (especially if to refer to Lucy Williams' elements of transnational sensibility¹⁰) (Williams in Charsley, 2012, p.33). But on the other hand, the marriage of Finnish men and Russian women could be marked as transnational. The marriage is arranged between two foreign spouses and in the case of mobility of Russian woman back to Russia the transnational ties are vivid and maintained by them.

For instance Toyota (2008) rejected the term "transnational marriage" in favour of "international marriage" on the grounds that no transnational body can authorize a marriage (which reflects a more legal aspect than personal commitment) (in Charsley, 2012, p.19-20).

Portes (in Goulbourne et al., 2010) did not define transnationals only as "people who engage in activities that require a regular and sustained social contacts over time *across national borders* for their implementation" (p.12). It is also not obligatory that the exchange of material/economic resources should be marked as transnational. For instance, Glick Schiller stated:

"Transnational social fields include individuals who have never themselves crossed borders but who are linked through social relations to people in distant and perhaps disparate locations." (Glick Schiller, 2004, p.457)

Nevertheless, in the case of the families I research the term "transnational" is applied as the connection between the spouses (from Russia and Finland) can be considered as transnational, transcending, especially when one of the spouses returns from abroad for some period but still keeps their connection with the family of the host country (in this case women in Russia for example). Furthermore, the term *transnational* is supposed to reveal the sense of the "transcending borders" (almost a "borderless" idea) and global cooperation between people.

¹⁰ Here she means the visits, regular contacts across borders

The word *international* is considered to reveal the idea of the clearly defined borders, and global cooperation between nation states. But in my case the immigrant women are considered as the cosmopolitan actors who are eager to cross the transcend borders.

God knows no distance¹¹ : “frontiering” and “relativizing”

Some scholars claim that migrant lives are exposed to particular modifications when the individual is engaged in transnational practices (ibid., p.61). These changes can be strongly reflected in the families and connected with the area of gender.

Although it was said in the introduction that this research is focused upon the sphere of children as a direct object of study, it is still worth mentioning that transnational life has a huge impact on the all members of family, and it especially demands the redefinition of mothering.

Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) formulated two key concepts that illustrate the transnational experiences of families – what they call “frontiering” and relativizing”. The authors regarded the concept of ‘frontiering’, which “denotes the ways and means transnational family members use to create familial space and network ties in terrain where affinal connections are relatively sparse” (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002, p.11). It describes how families form their transnational experiences across boundaries and maintain their kinship ties. “Relativizing refers to modes of materializing the family as an imagined community with shared feelings and mutual obligations” (ibid.). Still, the factors of distance and time of contact do not hinder the members of the family to “relativize” their relationships from a distance. The relativizing includes the “familial emotional and material attachments” (ibid, p.14). It combines the memories about relatives and members of the family at the place of origin and the economic support (sending remittances in both ways - to and from home). Still conceptions bring the ambiguity in the understanding of the experiences of the transnational families.

For the majority of Russian women the maintaining of the relationships with the family in the place of origin remains important thing. More often than not, a Russian family can be characterized as solid, where the members of the family are united and take care of each other. In Russian families the question of mothering and parenthood is of a particular significance. The care, which adults undertake for the children, is very important especially for the elder generations. For instance Galina left her family in Kazan, and it was obvious during the interview that she missed them.

¹¹ Charleszetta Waddles [Online]

The constant communication and visits are important for the maintenance of family ties, especially with children. As Galina said still, she does not feel herself lonely, as she knows that she has family. She mentally and emotionally refers to her to images of family, time spent together, holidays and such traditional practices as caring, cooking and baking *pirozki*¹² (*pirogi*) (typical for babushkas), praying for her children and sometimes knitting. But mostly, the main babushka's *destiny* is to care for children.

Lyudmila also expressed her aspiration for the maintenance of contact with her children and especially with her grandchild who is four years old. Her children live in Saint Petersburg. She also makes visits, and her grandson comes to Finland for Christmas. When we talked about her grandson she smiled but also tried to look strict when she was talking as she was afraid of her grandchild can get spoiled.

Despite of all the traditional practices of babushkas, their skills are more technologically advanced, what allows them to keep in touch with their relatives through long distances. As Lobel (2003) noted, "long-distance parenthood" linking "fractured families and geographically dispersed homes" what is common practically for the majority of migrants (in Vertovec, 2009, p.61).

The Internet, telephone calls and Skype support frequent communication. Skype is considered as one of the main contemporary means of communication across borders, it is especially important for members of the family who are not very mobile and already elderly. It has many advantages for transnational actors – it is accessible for everybody and easy used, and provides a fast connection. Distance is not so important with the usage of modern technological means – telephones, the Internet and Skype, in contrast to the real physical visits that Oksana characterized as "problematic". Thus, the practice of mothering/grand mothering are still important, even across borders for separated members of the families. However, with the advancement of technological innovations and means of communication the maintenance of contact across borders is much easier and accessible to everyone in financial terms. Especially with Skype, which is free to call another user.

However, not every family has close and warm relationships, for instance Katerina claimed that everybody is independent and the farther the parents the better.

The family relations and sustainment of contact also depend on the family's background, the upbringing of the following generations, and the personal desire for communication. For a

¹² English – "cakes"

long time, it was accepted that the elderly members of the family transmit the family values to the younger generation. However, as social backgrounds in Russia changes, as does the family foundations and settings.

To conclude, the chapter described the concept of the transnational family, which is the central focus of the thesis. In the connection with the concept of transnational family, scholars connect the terms of cross-border marriage and citizenship and claim that they are intertwined (Charsley, 2012). Moreover, cross-border marriage migration is interpreted as a “manifestation of the transnationalism...” as scholars have emphasized (Vetovec in Charsley, 2012, p.31). Thus, such interpretations confirm that the shift in the conceptualization of the family from a transnational perspective took place and it is possible to anticipate more attention paid to the problems surrounding transnational families. Many scholars define the institution of family differently, and some of them characterize families as “traditional” (Goulbourne et al., 2010). According to this model, the gender roles in the families bear unequal character with attention to the duties of women. Such models of behaviour and the order of household duties were discussed in my interlocutors’ experiences. Moreover, I discovered that their imaginations of family life were similar to the traditional representations of roles. One important step in the migration studies has been made towards the notion of family – transnational experiences became possible for every family, irrespective of social class. Thus, the focus from the cosmopolitan elite in the perspective of transnational studies moved to the more intimate level of the family (Grillo, 2008). The transnational lives of my Russian interlocutors across the Finnish-Russian border also include the constant practices of communication with the relatives at their place of origin. These practices are devoted not only material or, economic exchanges but emotional as well. The last involves also the attachment to the important practices of mothering and grand mothering across borders. The contacts are maintained today mainly by technological means of communication. Moreover it is closely connected with the notions of “frontiering” and relativizing” developed by Bryceson and Vuorela (2002). For the majority of interlocutors the maintenance of contact with their family remains the most important thing. The family members of the interlocutors communicate mainly by means of Skype, telephone calls and visits. As Finland and Russia are neighbouring countries, it is not that difficult to arrange the visits.

Chapter 6 How to study gender in a transnational setting?

The factor of gender in the transnational family is very significant as it also can serve as a reason for possible misunderstandings and conflicts. As gender is shaped socially, culturally

and morally differently in societies and countries, it is possible that transnational activities and practices may challenge the experience of transnational relations. Additionally, along with the processes of the formation of gendered models of behaviour, the mutual expectations of men and women are designed as well. I will give a brief description of challenges concerning gender here, the gender problematic will be more revealed in the subsequent chapters of the thesis intertwined with empirical examples. Furthermore, I examine gender behaviours and meanings through the narratives of the interlocutors and analyse their experiences.

In order to understand the gender differences it is also necessary to give a brief contextualization of the formation of the different gender models of Russia and Finland, with historical context. As the majority of my informants have their Soviet past behind them, there is a need to examine some important problems connected with gender formation in those times. Moreover, I suspect that the hard conditions of living and the contradictory gender policy (during Soviet times) served as the motives for Russian women to emigrate.

The interconnection of gender and transnational perspective also bears a particular significance. For many transnational actors their transnational practices also include the modification of their gender roles and behaviours. For instance, for many women from the East it is a challenging to migrate to a European country, as with the change of location, she also faces the changes in the gendered practices. Moreover, Western societies are based on equality that considers women as workers and child carers, illustrating that the status of the worker is no less important than the former one. In this light, the women struggle with their own identities, trying to balance two new responsibilities and acquire the role of the strong woman. However, often such changes in the role can cause stress and depression for a transnational actor.

Gender, labour and migration: the Soviet context

The “women question” (*zhenskii vopros*) was not discussed in Soviet times in the public sphere. It could be explained by traditional patriarchal model that existed during those times in the USSR and the influence of the government who controlled all spheres of life, including issues concerning women. *Zhenskii vopros* included a different range of questions and defined the status of women in legal, social, political and cultural areas (Marsh, 1996, p.1-2).

Sergeant (in Marsh) claimed during the seventy years of Soviet power women had a lack of rights, and were mobilized to perform hard labour whilst performing their duties in the family sphere (Marsh, 1996, p.269). It may have been the case that women were paid more and felt

independent, however this financial independence cost them their health. The status of women reduced with every passing year and it was obvious that women's voices were not taken into account in the area of politics, which remained dominated by men (ibid).

The position of Russian women in Soviet society and contemporary Russia has remained contradictory. It is possible to affirm that for the periods of *perestroika* and *post-perestroika* were characterized by obvious disadvantages for women as women's role in politics, society and economy. During those times women were challenged by the duality of their role – on the one hand they performed the hard labour equal to men, what indicated the “emancipation”, on the other hand they stayed mothers and wives who performed their domestic duties and worked in “feminized industries” (Filtzer in Marsh, 1996, p.216).

Due to the activities that women performed in those times the myth of the traditional patriarchal order was challenged and the notion of emancipation emerged in the Soviet society in 1960s (Marsh, 1996, p.2).

In the discussion with Slava over the Internet we talked about the position of women in Russian society today and emancipation. I claimed that the average Russian woman today is self-confident enough, but still, as a rule it is hidden in order to perform the role of a weak woman, who needs “a firm shoulder of man”. I also mentioned the idea of emancipation, which today is seen as contradictory in Russia. Despite all the images of women portrayed by society and the government as equal to men, they are not often permitted to engage in area of politics, administrative and business spheres. Slava responded that the idea of emancipation is of current interest today in Russia and she sees its possible blossom in the absence of the “*iron curtain*”. Her memories of the Soviet past were transmitted in the interview. She underlined this idea referring to the restriction of people's rights and the restrictions of mobility at that time. Furthermore, she claimed that the “engine is already started” underlying that emancipation is not new in Russia.

Although Anna, 56, had considerable experience of mobility, her parents had Ingrian roots, during the Soviet regime and because of societal problems; sometimes people moved from place to place looking for better opportunities, what happened with Anna's family. Anna changed jobs several times, she also told me about being damaged while working in the confectioner factory (being an assistant of the pastry-cook). In Anna's example, the labour of women was hard and without fixed working hours.

During *perestroika* women carried the burden of the economic crisis, which led to a lack of provisions and food, which then in its turn resulted in long queues and societal tension. Thus the interlocutor sees the hard conditions of living, including shortages of goods, products, and unemployment as prerequisite for migration. Moreover she calls this migration as “sausage emigration” (*kolbasnaya emigracia*). She continued to explain that they migrated immediately from the USSR when they discovered her husband’s Finnish roots.

The attempts of the post-soviet society to portray woman as an object of male dominance and as a servant in the household area was the confirmation that women were challenging male supremacy.

From the 1970s, as Lynne Attwood noted, the desire to return to the traditional gender roles increased. The images of women and men building socialism together were popularized and it was supposed that men worked outside the home and women had to take care of children and perform household duties (in Marsh, 1996, p.14). Moreover, the author called it “back-to-the-home” for women. There was assumption in society that juvenile problems were caused by a lack of a mother’s attention to the family and their children while they were working (ibid., p.216).

The propaganda of nationalistic moods resulted in popularizing a woman’s traditional role in soviet society after the dissolution of the USSR. Some representatives of the government supported the idea that: “Women should not work at all; let them stay at home and bring children” (Marsh, 1996, p.15). Thus the roles of women and men building socialism were strictly defined by the state and society: a man was considered as a breadwinner, who sponsored the family whilst the woman was a loving wife who devoted herself to the family and children.

All the listed challenges women experienced during Soviet times make me assume that some of the interlocutors were prompted to leave the Soviet Union; their decision was caused by the difficult living conditions and their hard life experiences. Poretskina claimed that social uncertainty was a characteristic feature of the existence of many people (Poretskina in Rotkirch and Haavio-Mannila, 1996, p.125). Moreover, all this instability led to problems in child rearing and child education and parents had worried expectations surrounding the future of their children. It is possible to refer to an example from Inga who said that during Soviet times she started to look at the West and she confessed that she realized that there was a great need to change her way of life, moreover she did not want her child to be the *soviet pioneers* (*pioneri*). Moreover, she underlined that she did not want to marry a Russian man and her

confidence and self-reliability allow her to feel stable and to characterize herself as independent woman.

Thus, at Soviet times women already realized the vagueness of the future, not only for them but also for their children. I suppose such difficult social atmosphere, conditions of life and labour, especially for women served as preconditions for their migration abroad when Finland also has been one of the most desired places of destination despite the prohibition of the mobility and migration at those times.

Gender, Russian women and family in contemporary Russia

The status of women in Russia changed after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. With a new economic direction, and its capitalist character, gender equality became more popular. Women acquired a higher education and better positions in the labour market and moreover, they also occupied positions in the male dominated professional spheres (World Trade Press, 2010, Russia Society and Culture complete Report, p.28). Moreover, it also resulted in an increase in migration and a whole range of changes in connection with transnational practices, and the change of perspective concerning gender.

Certainly the image of Russian women has changed from the 1990s. The statement that the patriarchal order dominated in Russia could be considered as mistaken, as we could already see that in Soviet times emancipation was rather strong.

Inter-cultural marriages are wide spread in Russia; women search for foreign boyfriends and spouses via the Internet, special dating agencies, or prefer to go abroad which brings the transnational paradigm in focus. Some Russian women confessed that they planned to marry a foreigner, and some of them said they did it primarily because it would grant them a residence permit to live in Finland. This image is also can be interpreted as stereotypical. Certainly not all marriages with foreigner are planned; some marriages can happen for reasons of love and mutual attraction.

In contemporary Russia, a woman is responsible for the household duties, whilst the man has a minimal role in that, however today the roles may be reversed. It is becoming common if the husband lives at home and takes care of children and women works and bears the role of a breadwinner. But still, such distribution of gender roles can be distressing for a husband.

The Russian gender system combines traits of Scandinavian and Mediterranean countries (Rotkirch and Haavio-Mannila, 1996, p.8). The equality which was a persistent trait of the

Nordic countries and more traditional gender roles and cultural specificity of such countries for instance as Spain and Italy are intertwined in the definition of gender order in Russia (ibid). As Rotkirch and Haavio-Mannila (1996) claim the gender system in Russia is based on the principles of hierarchy, complementarity and equality (p.10). A woman takes her central position today in the making decisions and more demanded in everyday life activities than a man. Moreover, in the area of family life a woman's voice is dominant while a man can be treated as non-persistent actor who is not expected to perform domestic duties (ibid).

Rotkirch and Temkina claimed that the view that a "woman's place is at home" is often expressed among Russian women with higher education (in Rotkirch and Haavio-Mannila, 1996, p. 51). I would say that in contemporary Russia, women are more inclined to build their careers on the basis of higher education; thus, today higher education is a necessary precondition for building a career. Russian women are eager to build their career and to gain higher education in order to be independent. In the unstable economic conditions, the changing social atmosphere, and the changing character of the institution of the family, women prefer to take care of their future on their own. Additionally, the notion of the patriarchal society still exists in Russian society; however, it seems stereotyped and is starting to disappear, especially if to look at the socio-economic atmosphere in Russia. Women desire to be successful in the labour market, what has lead to the higher position of women in some areas of labour than men (business for instance), however, women's participation in this area is still under the question. The presence of traditional family order depends on the context, and varies from family to family. I would say that women prefer to create/support an image of a patriarchal order in the family as they still want to feel the *man's shoulder (muzskoe plecho)* but at the same time they want to be independent and have their own security in the case of divorce or other possible problems.

However, for instance, Inga appreciates the care of the Finnish husband, she likes when he treats her like "a child" and she calls herself "a crystal ball" (*hrustalnii shar*)¹³, which resembles the traits of Russian traditional gender roles, but at the same time she demonstrated her strong and independent side when I asked her about possible cheating from the side of her husband. Upon the move to Finland Inga became confident, with the support of the Finnish social system, what gave her confidence in contrast to Russia, where a woman could rely only on her relatives, however, it is worth emphasizing that the feeling of the independence was already embedded in Inga before she moved to Finland. Thus we can see how she combines

¹³ Sometimes in Russia the relatives of the bride (woman) can give advices to the husband (groom) pointing out that he has to take care of the women and treat her as a "crystal ball", common phrase in Russian language.

both roles - a faint Russian women “under care” of her Finnish husband and the strong independent woman in the case of any kind of problems. It somehow echoes with the Soviet past when women carried out several roles. In the traditional patriarchal model the husband supports the family but today it is flexible and depends on the agreement of the family members. The question of money distribution can be negotiated between spouses, as more often a man earns the money and a woman controls the family budget. In general, it was concluded from the interviews that the factor of money for Russian women is important. It expresses the indication of the stability of a man, his dominant position and reliability for a Russian woman.

Motherhood – womanhood

Linda Edmondson claimed that for women *motherhood* was the main function they had to perform¹⁴ (in Marsh, 1996, p.104).

However, such a biological determination leads to disqualification of women, what could be interpreted as inequality (ibid).

The cult of motherhood in the traditional Russian gender order includes the factor of biology as well, this supposes that women are predetermined to become mothers and bear the responsibility for raising children (ibid., p.46). Thus fathers are considered as less important in the child rearing issues. This contradicts with the Finnish view, where the father occupies equal position with the mother in the family; this striking difference is typical for both countries of Russia and Finland. In Finland, according to my observations, sometimes fathers take care even more for their children than the mothers. For the Russian society it is usually unacceptable.

Rotkirch and Temkina (in Rotkirch and Haavio - Mannila, 1996) listed several conceptions of womanhood referring to Russian women. In the interviews they provided several conceptions that are peculiar to Russian woman: family, especially regarding children, childbirth, care-taking, and a strong personality that she should not demonstrate to men. Another necessary ingredient of Russian femininity is to be feminine and to give what *you are expected to give* – warmth, attention and to be beautiful (Rotkirch and Haavio-Mannila, 1996, pp. 57-58).

Gender order in Finland – the Dawn

¹⁴ I suppose in the sense of biology, because the function of the soviet worker demanded women’s time and forces as well.

The conditions of a hard life and the long road of the development of the country created the gender order of Finnish women and men, who were obliged to take the roles of equal workers in order to overcome the economic hardships. These images soon became stereotypical in Finnish society, coming from antiquity carrying all the assumptions about the strength of Finnish women and their bravery, and holding an equal status to men (Apo et al., 1999, p. 17). Although a woman was considered as independent and equal to a man, the woman still was associated with her family and male members of the family (ibid.).

In Finnish society the factor of the land always has played a significant role. As Apo et al. (1999) noted the increase of people who did not have land happened in the 19th-20th centuries and the author also claimed that the contemporary Finnish family is similar to the a landless one where the family included two breadwinners (Apo et al., 1999, p. 18). This model of family contradicts with the Russian traditional model, which includes only one breadwinner and the woman as a housewife. The income of the family mostly depended on self-made products and goods, not farming and the land connected labour, which excluded the presence of patriarchal order for women and led to equality with men (ibid.).

“God does not feed lazy bones” – this old Finnish proverb referred to both sexes. Thus, the caring responsibility of women was also blurred by the duty of work and the care was assigned to grandparents or other members of the family (ibid., p.19). It resulted in the lack of attention from parents and the abundance of care of grandparents (ibid.).

Examining the function of the role of the breadwinner, Julkunen explained regarding Lewis’s observation that the Nordic countries did not have the role of the breadwinner for men (in Apo et al., 1999, pp.89-90). Nowadays in Finland there are two breadwinners in the family – women and men which take the equal positions. Both parents go to work and have around the same amount of working hours – “staying at home” must be justified (ibid.).

In Finland it is very common that partners or spouses may characterize their relations as partnership/companionship. In Finland it is also unacceptable to think that a woman’s main mission is to bring warmth and care in the terms of female duty, which was not perceived as significant during the process of industrial development in Finland. The peasant life of Finland predetermined the antipathy of women towards feminine look (dress, make-up and hairstyles) (ibid., p.23).

Suomen naisten ja miesten¹⁵

Since ancient times Finns have associated women with nature and animals, in the epic tales she possessed a magical power that allowed her to protect her children, cattle, husband and home. Finns believed that a woman was the personification of the bear, full of strength and living in the North. Women were powerful and brave, strong emotionally and physically. Her body was seen as sacred as it was connected with the cosmos (Apo et al., 1999, p.11) and kept the spiritual and natural forces in balance. Thus these forces were the valuable treasure of a woman, her vital source and lifeblood. Her appearance and outer traits were not important in contrast to her inner force of nature (ibid.).

This mythical magic has been a part of a woman's force since she used the power of fire and the hearth (ibid.). The sauna has always been considered as a sacred place and is still respected as such. It is closely connected with women and child birth:

“The link was based on both everyday activity and on symbolic and magical thought. By using the power of fire and the hearth, women of child-bearing age could close their open bodies. If they did not want children, they had to sit between the hot stove and smoke – opening of the sauna.” (Apo et al., 1999, p.11).

Thus, already from the ancient times a woman was perceived as a strong and powerful human, who possessed magical power and was able to protect her close ones. Moreover, a woman was seen as independent, brave and respected.

Finnish women continue to retain these qualities and hold a stable position in society. There was a struggle for women's rights in the beginning of the 19th century, when women obtained a different range of rights in Finland. The aims of gender equality and achieving a fair balance of rights promised a new development in the redistribution of gender roles between women and men in Finland, especially in 19th and 20th centuries. In 1906 Finnish women were granted the right to vote and it can be considered as a serious step to achieving equal rights in the public sphere.

Due to historical events and the development of the country, Finnish people were bound to reject the idea of “non-working woman”, thus the woman has been considered equal to men in terms of labour for a long time (World Trade Press, 2010, Finland Society and Culture Complete Report, pp.24-25). In Russia, the idea of non-working woman can be perceived as the object of envy from the side of other women (female relatives and friends) as according to

¹⁵ “Finnish men and women” (Eng.)

their ideals it means that a woman has a stable wealthy partner who takes care of her and allows her to perform her womanly duties – to care of home, children and keep herself beautiful.

In the area of family Finnish women and men may choose their partners and spouses according their personal preferences as well as in Russia (ibid.). Often women in Finland marry at the average age of 29 while men at the age of 31, or they can live together and not registered legally (ibid). For Russia, such an age can be interpreted as unsuccessful or seen as negative. The average age of woman and man become married in Russia changes, but at that moment it is around 23-26 years old when people marry.

Still there is an idea in Finland that the man is the head of the family and the woman is responsible for hearth of the family; however in practice everything can be in reverse, especially as spouses can divide their property and their bank accounts in order to feel more independent (ibid.). If to apply it to Russian family model, it would be impossible and perceived as wrong and even offensive. When a woman and man marry, everything becomes common and shared by the spouses equally (finance and property).

In Russian society when man and woman marry, the man takes responsibility for woman and promises to share everything and she, in her turn also should do the same. However, today couples may contract a marriage (in the case of divorce) between themselves, however it depends on the status of family and financial conditions of the spouses, middle class families usually do not make contracts. Thus in the view of Russian women these Finnish ideas of sharing seem uncommon and strange.

In the case of the child birth parents in Finland have the right for paid leave and they are given a salary during this period, however it was a long road to the achieving this stable childcare support system.

Childlessness is not perceived with shame in Finland however; this is in direct contrast to Russia, where a woman may be constantly remained about her age and the time for childbirth. In the case of divorce, parents receive an equal right to spend time with a child and take care of him/her, in Russia normally it is the mother who gets the right for care more often (ibid.).

Gender – socially constructed and stereotypically viewed?

Gender stereotyping was labelled as a disease by Cook and Cusack (2010). They claimed that the harm caused from gender stereotyping even may influence an individual's dignity, create

barriers for his/her benefits and imposes various restrictions (Cook and Cusack, 2010, p.3). They also noted that individuals are often placed in categories of age, status, sex, language, and other (ibid., p.10). Javier Trevi-O refers to Goffman's constructionist's perspective on gender and West and Zimmermann's (1987) concept of "doing gender":

"Goffman points out that the enactment of social attributes such as age, sex, territory and class status are a crucial component of the projected definitions of selves in social situations" (p. Javier Trevi-O, 2003, p.90).

Javier Trevi-O (2003) underlines Goffman's point of view that it is social organization and its practices which construct gender and not the nature (ibid.). Moreover, Goffman underlined that the gender is constructed by means of situations that express gender (ibid.).

"Gender is not something that we are but something that we do continually in everyday social interaction. We "do gender" by organizing our various activities in ways that reflect or express gender. Even we do not act in ways that depart from cultural scripts for persons of our sex, gender is nonetheless "done" to us when others judge our behavior in gender." (Goffman in Javier Trevi-O, p.90)

Juntunen (2002) challenged the idea of gender as "a final result of underlying single logic", by this he meant the variety of ways in which gender can be interpreted and enacted (Juntunen, 2002, p.15). He also underlined the fluid nature of gender in the conditions of multiple contexts and time (Juntunen, 2002, p.16).

Furthermore, Juntunen (2002) claimed that the gender is expressed through symbolic representations such as language, body styles and way of dressing and so on (Juntunen, 2002, p. 16). In the context of Russian women, it was mentioned how, with the help of such symbolic means, they attempt to preserve their identity and peculiar gender traits (inherited in their native culture).

Despite long periods of living in Finland the majority of my interviewed Russian interlocutors continued to keep their Russian outer appearance, although slightly modified. These symbolic elements such as make up, jewellery, heels, dresses/skirts, and polished nails are part of the gendered culture, which brings particular messages, additionally in the host society.

Returning to the problem of stereotyping in connection with gender it is possible to mention again that the gender is fluid and its construction depends on the context and discourse. The

problem of stereotyping traditional roles of men and women, assumption that the man has to have a dominant role and the woman has to obey, are important in my study.

Since the Soviet times, women were mostly perceived as the passive objects of male lust (Marsh, 1996, p.260-261). The subordinate position of women in Russia in the past and now is a mythic idea, however their position depends on the context again.

The media is also one of the main contributors in the development, construction and reproduction of stereotypes, especially regarding immigrant groups. I believe the media has a great impact on the formation of individual perceptions, including the ways he or she forms, and constructs the gendered “self”. For example, Inga stated that when she arrived in Finland, Russian women were already described as “prostitutes” or in another negative manner. It is also connected with possible changes in the gender behaviour as some of them consciously could change their outer appearance and emotional behaviour as well – for example not to wear makeup or dresses/skirts in Finland, choosing more neutral/sport style. However, there is a lack of images of Finnish women in the Russian media. Therefore, the Internet is considered as one of the powerful means for the formation of standards.

Thus, the stereotypical image of Russian women and Finnish men are widespread and varied. In my work it was important to stay detached from these stereotypical images and refer to the experiences and narratives of my interlocutors.

Finnish husbands – “plush” and “soft”?¹⁶

There was a surprising lack of literature devoted to Finnish men that could characterize them according to different contexts. I examined Finnish men from the perspective of my Russian interlocutors, who attempted to describe them. It could bring something new to the field, or to interpretations of Finnish society, it would be rather unfair to ignore the male part of society without a proper, coherent description.

According to the interlocutors’ opinions, Finnish men are different in their social status, behaviour, upbringing and character traits. All the cases were different and it is impossible to make generalization. Anna, for example, claimed that Finnish men can be compared with a child, when they need the support of women, but on the other hand they are very “sharp eyed” in the matters of women and they observe women often.

¹⁶ “Plush” and “soft” –the characterization is taken from the interview with interlocutor Nina.

Anna claimed that Finns are mostly generous and pay for the woman. She also mentioned the problem of alcoholism; she stated that for Finnish men it is rather typical. Another informant claimed that when Finnish men drink, they become different people. She stated, referring to negative connotation, that Finnish men may reveal their “real nature” after a while. Nina claimed that Finnish men are “soft and plush”, and also she noted that Finnish men are not clear in their decisions regarding women and that they possess good qualities as well.

Interlocutors mentioned the factor of the Internet which “pull the wool over women’s eyes” and when a potential spouse create an attractive image of himself while being a “marriage speculator”. Moreover, Lyudmila for instance, stated that her husband loved to buy everything for himself and dress himself. However she also stated that he was looking bad until she helped him to obtain his “human look”.

Several women also mentioned the idea that Finnish men also feel domination over Russian women when they migrate to Finland. The moral and financial suppression can exist in the transnational Russian-Finnish families as well. Slava underlined this idea several times in our discussion and claimed that it is very difficult to catch the moment when a husband started to suppress her.

Two of my interlocutors experienced domestic violence, illustrating that some Finnish men also are inclined to domestic abuse, unfortunately as are some men and women from other nationalities. In the case of Lyudmila, a Finnish husband was drunk and broke her arm while in the case of Slava he was on the verge of punching her. In connection with that there is a reference to the alcohol problems.

However, it is impossible to apply the listed characterizations to all Finnish men and to generalize them, at the same time some positive moments were noted by interlocutors for example the attitude of Finns to children and aspiration to keep the relationships “warm” as Katerina claimed.

Additionally, a Finnish husband was marked as a “stone wall” (a Russian metaphor expression), an honourable man, who takes care of his wife very good. Moreover, several interlocutors claimed that Finish men mostly are generous, and pay for women, which is important for Russian women. Also they mentioned an addiction for travelling.

The most challenging typically cultural differences between a Russian wife and a Finnish husband included the food differences – Katerina, for example noted that she had a lot of quarrels with her husband as he always has been late to have a meal.

Thus, Finnish society could be characterized as ambivalent in the sense of balancing equality between men and women. It is possible to say that the equality has been achieved, however mostly it happened in the area of work and labour, whilst in the sphere of politics women still are in minority. The long road to the economic development of Finland, caused the division of the gender roles and put the Finnish woman in the conditions of an inescapable situation in the terms of her role. I observed some similarities in the positions of Russian and Finnish women, as in both societies they experienced the dual role of breadwinner and housewife. The characterization of Finnish men by my Russian interlocutors was not typical or one-linear, as every case and character is different. Finnish women are still considered as the most independent in Europe and this could cause the aspiration of Finnish men for a union with the less emancipated type of woman from the East.

Mutual Expectations in the Finnish-Russian Transnational Family

The Western vision of a Russian woman allowed Finnish men to regard them as housewives, who take care of them, their house and children. In turn, a Russian woman may anticipate a reliable, western man; wealthy enough to provide the future for her and their future children, but in reality she faces a man, who is ready to divide the responsibility and difficulties of livelihood with her equally. Russian women's perception of Western men also has been constructed by means of mass media and the Internet, which was mentioned by my Russian interlocutors. In these sources, Western men are described in a very positive way. Moreover, the gender order which has been developed for a long time and inculcated to women in the terms of traditional, patriarchal society still retain its impact and makes Russian women unconsciously to look for a strong, masculine man who would be able to dominate over her, in a good sense of the word. The mutual expectations of both spouses result in the situation when the foreign spouses try to understand each other but it can lead to the situation of conflict.

Smart in her book "Personal life" (2007) stated that family life may not be as coloured and bright as it may seem. She paid attention to the dark side of family life and emotions produced between family members. The author places an emphasis on such feelings as: anxiety, hurt and disrespects (p.154). Following Smart's ideas it is possible to affirm that the bigger part of the problems and conflicts are grounded on migrants' self-characterization as marginal in the host country. Consequently, it creates the situation of inequality between the members of the transnational family. Furthermore, the families exposed to the inequality and domination one of the spouses in different areas (moral, financial and physical etc.) may face the problem of

mutual expectations discussed in the work. I regard the expectations not only at the level of gender but also at the level of culture.

Javier Trevi-O (2003) underlined Blumstein's idea that identities are also formed on the basis of "cultural scripts", what also allows to construct our own self (Javier Trevi-O, 2003, p.89). The scholar continues also by saying that relationships are performed with different roles; these roles possess particular cultural meanings that influence on the expectations in relationships (ibid.). Thus, following our behavioural expectations we shape ourselves according to them (ibid.). Hence, the "cultural scripts" also engage in the construction of our identities and behaviours. Additionally, Goffman claimed that "the projections of self in everyday life are made up in large part by culturally prescribed enactments of basic social attributes such as class, gender and age." (Javier Trevi-O, 2003, p.89).

Unger (in Miville, 2003) in contrast, considered gender as a "socially constructed attributions and expectations assigned to individuals on the basis of their biological sex" (p.2). However, Miville underlined that from 1980s gender started to be studied in "the context" rather than only from the point of view of the biological inheritance (Miville, 2013, p.231). This context may be explained by notions of sociopolitical context, hierarchical relations and cultural beliefs and norms of the societies we live in (Miville, 2013, p.12, p.231). Moreover, the social context is a core element of the evolution of gender roles today as the author underlines (ibid., p.26).

Miville (2013) and the group of other researchers provided their research devoted to the multicultural gender roles for ethnic people where they presented the model for negotiating multicultural gender roles which I apply in my research.

The process of defining ourselves as gendered beings is multi-faceted and includes many nuances. It is possible for us to "construct" or "do" gender by ourselves (Miville, 2013, p.232). It also will refer us to the idea of "doing gender" expressed by Goffman, West and Zimmermann's (1987) mentioned in the previous part devoted to the stereotyped image of gender (Javier Trevi-O, 2003, p.90). Scholars also claim that gender roles indicate the positions of individuals in the society with respect for the traditions of masculinity and femininity which both could be expressed through the appearance, personal habits and traits and the opinions about the distribution of duties and responsibilities in the area of labour and household duties (Miville, 2013, p.3). In the traditional gender order women have been perceived as less powerful than man, moreover she was associated with domestic household duties (ibid). However, some scholars, for instance Margaret Mead, claimed that such images

of roles are not applicable to every case and it would be wrong to generalize; she discovered that women can play different roles and be flexible in different societies (ibid.).

The gender models and norms about femininity and masculinity may be inherited from the family, friends or settings surrounding the individual (Miville, 2013, p.232).

Thus, we may see that members of society from their families inherit the models of behaviour and gender roles model, and expectations are also formed during the process of the socialization in the family. However, it may happen that the expectations of foreign spouses may be violated with negative consequences, for example conflicts, or feeling of isolation. One interlocutor, Inga, stated that “to expect something” is absolutely useless as she said that she did not expect anything from her Finnish husband. She continued to claim that the problems in the transnational marriage are an exaggerated notion and that the main problem is that individuals do not want to adjust and understand one another’s culture. She emphasized that the solution and prevention of the possible conflicts is to accept of both cultures.

Another example concerning the notion of common sharing in the family is when Nina says that she was surprised by the reaction of her Finnish husband when he found out that she took his glasses as she lost hers. Here the expectations are mainly based on the notion of sharing in the family discussed previously.

For her, being raised in Russia, where people in families often share everything – including money, clothes, food, and other things, she was surprised by the habits of Finnish society where the husband and wife may live independently with each other.

Galina characterized her moral condition as “fear” and “worship” when she was telling me how her husband easily went to his ex-wife when she needed his help, she felt very uncomfortable, although it is wide spread in Finland that after divorce spouses may stay in contact and help each other out when needed, this is not always accepted in Russia.

In Russia it is not very often that spouses remain in contact after the divorce, however the cases are individual. It does not mean that they remain in conflict but it also does not mean they stay friends. Thus, for Galina the situation of maintenance of contact with her ex-spouse seems uncommon, in contrast to her Finnish husband.

In connection with that, I also took the notion of multicultural gender role model developed by Miville (2013). The authors claimed that the core mechanism of the model is the process of *negotiating gender roles* (ibid., p.235). It has already been mentioned that individuals may

inherit particular views and norms about gender roles from particular sources, which include: unique cultural values, expectations and norms; traditional notions of masculinity and femininity shared across cultural groups; socializing agents and institutions; racial-ethnic and gender stereotypes (ibid.).

Moreover, the authors stated that these sources are intertwined and negotiate about the individual's gendered behaviour and roles in which the individual should engage (ibid.). Thus, gender roles can be formed according in the processes of these negotiations (ibid.).

The process of roles negotiation is flexible – individuals possess the ability to change adjust their roles depending on the settings, thus they may express themselves as soft and feminine in one setting, and as strong and masculine in another setting (ibid., p.251).

As Miville proposed, the negotiating gender roles model may include several components¹⁷ :

Resolving conflicts: as the result of socialization, people are exposed to varied perceptions of constructions of gender roles; for example the Eastern traditional model may be opposed to the Western, egalitarian model. Becoming aware of these areas of differences contributing to conflicts may help to avoid conflict. Also a woman may find a similar community that has the same roles as her own. Simple acceptance of the roles does not guarantee the individual satisfaction however (Miville, 2013, pp. 236-237).

These reflections are connected with the listed cases of expectations of Russian women. As very often, when they migrate to Finland, the media, the Internet and rumors about western men, guide them especially those who never have been abroad, thus it happens that they are not aware of the society peculiarities and the distribution of gender roles in Finland.

Navigating privilege and oppression: In different societies the members are prescribed specific gender roles, which may be manifested in various, and distinct ways. In the most traditional societies women are oppressed / dominated by man, and upon the change of settings woman may feel *challenged* and it is uncommon for her to perform the role of “superwoman” (independent) as the author noted. As the author claimed, self-reflexivity and critical conscious “in the context of hope” may help a woman to overcome the oppression (ibid., p.239).

¹⁷ Although the author regarded the model in connection with the people of color, I apply it also to the case of Russian women as I find many similarities in the processes of negotiations.

As it has been mentioned the situation of several Russian women Slava and Lena (her example was mentioned before) who was exposed to oppression from the side of Finnish man included emotional and financial character.

[...but in general you feel yourself in such marriage uncomfortably, you take this image – the image of the “worker”, you become closed. You accept this image psychologically.] [Slava, 44]

Thus in these two examples, especially in the example of Slava and Lena the feeling of isolation which has been mentioned begins to appear. Slava underlines that she, for instance, becomes “closed” and takes “the image of “worker”” psychologically.

Understanding one’s impact on others: Sometimes the fulfilment of traditional roles may influence other people in a negative way. The duty of performing a masculine role, for instance may result in oppressive behaviours, which may damage women and other families’ members. Sometimes the individual may exaggerate their roles what causes the distress. That is why it is necessary to examine the behaviours and its impact on other people (ibid., p.239). For a Finnish husband it is important to understand and realize his behaviour in attitude to his Russian wife, to re-evaluate his attitude and opinion.

Transforming self-perceptions: It has been mentioned that individuals in the society where they have been raised and socialized inherit cultural values, norms and beliefs. These values, norms and beliefs also may be accompanied by negative stereotypes about them from the point of other cultures as well. Thus it results in a struggle of values and stereotypes that influences the construction of gender roles. Some individuals adjust to the norms and gender order easily while others do not. The author pointed out that the only one way may help to eradicate the conflict – the clarification of cultural expectations of the gender roles and how these expectations may be processed and adopted by individuals (Miville, 2013, p.240). In the Finnish Russian context it touches upon both spouses – a Finnish husband and a Russian woman as well. For example, following Russian cultural customs and habits it is usual in Russia to celebrate the 8th of March – Women’s Day (see Dmitrieva, online). I read the interview of one Russian woman who claimed that at first it was difficult to get used to the lack of presents and congratulations from her Finnish husband that in contrast to him a Russian husband is very attentive and stubborn. She also claimed that at first she was offended by that but then she realized: “If you cannot change the situation, than change your attitude to that.” She also noted that this day is treated as a day of independent woman in Finland in contrast to Russia where it is celebrated as the day of beautiful ladies. In this case the transforming of self-perceptions may cause a Russian woman emotional stress and inevitable

adjustment to the new cultural and behavioural habits that sometimes may be continued throughout the whole life process.

However, with this simple example I see contradictions as well. I observed many Finns who bought flowers at this day for their women and even my female friend received flowers from a Finnish man. Thus it proves, that partners of different nationalities may find a compromise and in order to keep the relationships strong and avoid conflict. It is possible to adjust the habits and customs in both cultures mutually, what also can be presented as the enthralling process of learning about other cultures. But it also depends on the personality of individuals, as talking to one my European friend he claimed that if a person moved to the host country than he/she should adapt there and adapt to the cultural norms. Moreover he claimed that the West sees the Eastern traditions (particularly Soviet) as less important and not so relevant for them. But then, how it is possible to prevent and overcome conflicts in international alliances?

Intersecting identities: In the contemporary world of globalization, economic exchanges, increased mobility and ease of communication between societies and countries, we all are exposed to the influence of other social groups and communities. These influences include religious views, sexual views, and social class impacts and so on. Individuals who cross these areas absorb the core social meanings of these identities and reproduces them through his/her behaviour. In this way these processes influence the construction of gender roles (Miville, 2013, p.241). This component also was reflected in the perceptions of my Russian interlocutors. For instance Inga referred to the examples of Asian culture and the country of Nepal, with which she associates herself. She claimed that she feels different from Finns; during the talk she mentioned the smiles that can be seen so rarely on the streets of Finland in contrast to sunny, cheerful Nepal. She identifies herself with this country; moreover she identifies herself as Asian, which expresses the idea of traditional gender roles.

Navigating emotions: The mismatching mutual expectations, especially in terms of gender roles and cultural norms may lead to the outburst of the conflict. In turn, individuals exposed to stereotypical criticism in the light of gender roles may feel distressed and acquire negative stereotypes about themselves. Thus, Miville underlined that it is necessary to pay attention to the *cultural expectations and norms* in order to develop the means of negotiation and solution. Emotional change is one of the key elements. The author underlines that the ability to learn to navigate the emotions may help to change oneself and communities, which would result in a successful negotiation of gender roles (Miville, 2013, p.242). This component may be also closely connected with the component of transforming self-perceptions, which also demands

the adjustment to the habits. In the case of Russian women it is possible to say that many of them consider themselves and other Russian women in a negative way. They refer to the stereotypes created about them and especially when they indicate the unsuccessful integration in Finnish society.

During the fieldwork process I observed Russian women, talked to them and I noted that their characterizations of other Russian women ended up in Finland bore were negative. I cannot reveal the reason of that; however I suppose it can be dictated by the motivation of competition between them they could inherit in Russian society that is rather common– “if you have better it is not good, I will have better than you”. It also may be influenced by the existing stereotypes about Russian women, which can be supported by some individuals from Russian community in Finland, which spoil the image of other Russian women there. It causes negative perceptions of Russian women to their compatriots.

Constructing own gender styles/expressions: Miville (2013) claimed that gender might be represented in many ways. Femininity and masculinity can be expressed in distinct ways in different ethnic communities. The gender norms of masculinity and femininity may differ across cultures and they may mismatch each other that can result in conflict. Thus, gender can be expressed in the outer appearance as well, what assumes make up, clothes and so on (pp.242-243).

Constructing roles in family, community and society: The process of the construction of gender roles is connected with the creation of one’s own role as a family member, community or society. The gender roles are constructed in families, which are considered one of the most important areas, where the parents are supposed to take care of the children. The maintenance of the expectations and responsibilities attached to gender roles provides a defined way of negotiating gender roles in society (ibid., p.243).

Not all my interlocutors have children in their Finnish-Russian marriage; however some of them have a child from a Finnish husband. What about the motherhood and the role of mother of Russian woman in a mixed family? It is common that she is able to perform this role in a good way. Another question if a foreign husband may fulfill the expectations of her. In Russian-Finnish transnational marriage foreign spouses construct their gender models differently. It is important to understand which role ethnicity may play in the construction of gender and how Russian women may adapt their inherited gender roles to new settings. Additionally, cultural values, norms and beliefs, which shape the gender roles within particular racial-ethnic communities, are taken into account (Miville, 2013, p.10-11).

In this chapter, I described and compared the gender orders of Finland and Russia. I believe there was a need to take an insight into the Soviet background of my interlocutors in order to explain their behaviour in the terms of gender and culture. Moreover, it allowed me to reveal the common traits between the gender orders of Finland and Russia as it turned out that the women's position was interpreted similarly in both societies.

I believe that the factor of gender is important in the transnational families as it may cause conflicts and misunderstandings. It leads us to the notion of the mutual expectations, as the gender is constructed differently (socially and culturally) in different societies there is a possibility that such differences may challenge the experience of the transnational relations for foreign spouses. In my research I attempt to find out how mutual expectations contribute to the emergence of the conflict situations and misunderstandings in Finnish-Russian transnational marriage and in which ways they are manifested. In this chapter I refer to the mechanism of negotiating gender roles in the multicultural perspective developed by Miville (2013). I believe that author's conception for multicultural gender role model explains the case of Russian female migrants in a proper way.

Regarding the gender order in Finland and Russia it is possible to note that both systems retain their own peculiarities and formation of gender models occurred in different settings and time, however I see the similarities between them in terms of flexibility of gender roles and specific position of woman in both societies. It is hardly possible to determine specific/precise roles of women and men in both societies, as often they can be changed and influenced by diverse range of factors.

In general gender is constructed by ourselves, gender is constructed by ourselves in our everyday life. Moreover, gender may be interpreted and enacted differently in multiple contexts and different time. The problem of stereotypes for gender roles and assumptions that a man has to have the dominant role and the woman has to obey are rather topical in my study case. Especially this assumption is strong in the case of traditional role of Russian women in Western countries. However, the position of Russian woman today in society is undetermined and there is a need to regard it in a particular context.

Additionally, the media is one of the main contributors that help to construct stereotypical images. I believe that the media has a great impact on the formation of individual perceptions, including the ways he or she forms and constructs gendered "self". I presented descriptions of Russian women and Finnish women and men, through my interlocutors' narratives, and not referring to the stereotypes. According to Russian interlocutors' views, Finnish men are

different in their social status, behaviour, upbringing and traits of character. All the cases were different and it is impossible to generalize. Mostly, men were characterized as generous. One interlocutor mentioned the problem of alcoholism. The inclination to the domestic abuse also was one of the mentioned traits. Additionally, their kindness and politeness were not left without attention.

Chapter 7 The reality of life: Russian wives and Finnish husbands

Transnational marriage as a tool: love or gain?

In the first sections of the thesis I discussed the possible motives of Russian women for migration to Finland. But in this part I would like to give a deeper insight in the stereotypical and stigmatized image of such unions. In general, this chapter is devoted to the stereotypical visions of Russian immigrants in Finland, and on the other hand, the visions of Russian women on the process of their integration and adaptation, as well as their characterization of Finnish culture and society. Additionally, this chapter is devoted to the intimate side of the transnational couples - I attempt to reflect upon the construction of relationships between Finnish husbands and Russian wives in connection with mutual expectations through the narrations of the latter.

[So I got acquainted with a Finn in the Internet. It happened in 2002, I was alone with my child, and I had a very strong feeling of loneliness. So the Internet gave me communication, you understand. (Smiles). I met a Finn there and I started to learn and read about Finland, about “*fairytale*”. So I had a Finnish pen pal friend and something was going wrong with him and he introduced me to his friend’s friend, which later became my husband. It was in 2003. In 2003 he arrived in Saratov to me with his stuff.] [Nina, 51]

[So my ex-husband is 58 years old now. I worked in the little shop and my life was going wrong. I wanted to have a child, and men ...you know, there is no wish to have a child from such type of men (in Russia). I started to observe the men who were coming from Finland. So, the result is three and a half years and one and a half year of divorce. It is not like everybody think: “Wow, she lives abroad, she is in chocolate.” [...] We were looking the common points for a long time. We met in Petrozavodsk, he came to my shop. And I thought that, actually, this man is not bad, I was thinking- maybe I have to get acquainted, and that time I was thinking about the child. Well, he came to my shop and I fed him. And he called me with him to move to Finland and we were looking for the common points for a long time.] [Slava, 44]

[D: How did you meet your husband? Did you have an aim to move here or not?

G: I had no purpose to move.

D: Did you meet each other in Tampere?

G: In Tampere, yes, I have been here on vacation. *I was thinking for two years* if I really want to move here. When I was on holiday, I liked everything.

D: You liked?

G: Yes, being on holidays. But I am already in my ages, and I thought that it would be very difficult with the language and so on.] [Galina, 54].

The idea of true and pure love in a transnational marriage seems more unreliable and blinded by factors of economic gain and mobility possibilities after the marriage. The above first extract may resemble the idea of aspiration for better living standards and possibilities, whilst the last two extracts demonstrate that the reality of living and moving abroad is not so cheerful and easy. At first, may be Slava desired to move to Finland for reasons of better prospects, but she soon realized that a life with a foreigner is not an easy task, not to mention all the challenges of social adaptation and her lack of Finnish. The same happened with Lyudmila, whose experience was described in the beginning of the work. If the assumption of the aspirations of Russian women to move abroad and “catch” and marry a foreigner is true, then why was Galina thinking for two years if she really wanted to move to Finland. Thus, the stereotypical images of Russian women and their aims of migration often generalize migrants without any attempt to look at it a broader perspective. It would be wrong to generalize the groups of female migrants in Finland as the motives of immigration may be caused by different reasons. For instance, a Russian woman, who is well-educated and from a middle class family also may migrate abroad, but in this case her reasons for the migration would differ from stereotypical assumptions. The purposes of migration also can be different, including career opportunities and academic work. Once, being in a company of Russian and Estonian they stigmatized me as a Russian prostitute, who came to Finland in order to find a Finnish husband. In the talk with them I explained that I have been a Master’s student in Finland, who was doing the research on the topic of transnational marriages, they were laughing and said: ‘Hah, it is good to write with your own experience.’ (With irony). I said that I do not have experience of relationships with a Finnish man and all my research is based on the interviews with Russian women. But returning to the issue of the perception of Russian women in Finland, in this case we may see, that even the “native” groups of Russians consider their female comrades as “prostitutes” and “hunters’ for the economic gain and better life in Finland. Thus, it is obvious why Russian women’s behaviour in Finland could be called as defensive.

Global hypergamy

Constable (2005) noted that marriage mobility supposes the movement of brides from a less developed country to the more advanced and wealthy location – from the less developed south to the more developed north (p.10), this phenomenon is marked by the author as a “*global hypergamy*”. It is an interesting phenomenon as it may involve women and men around the globe. Certainly the aspiration for economic gain and mobility possibilities underpins the marriage market, the globalization and differences in standards of living – all these factors facilitate marriage migration. Constable (2005) underlined that the notion of “hypergamy” provides the questions for “how, for whom, and in what sense such marriages represent upward mobility” (p.10).

Freeman claimed that the mobility caused by marital reasons is contradictory: “marital mobility entail a number of paradoxes, including those of nationality/ethnicity, gender, geography, and economic class” (in Constable, 2005, p. 10). Migration is considered more often as “female” than “male”. Besides, the common assumptions surrounding the bride’s poor economic condition and low status are incorrect, as well as the assumption about potential foreign husband who has a better economic position (ibid.). Many women today in Russia have high social statuses, even in comparison to Finnish men. Many Russian women who migrate abroad, including Finland are well educated and originate from good families.

[I: Look, I am from Leningrad, from an intelligent family anyway, well...

D: Were you born in Leningrad?

I: Yes, it is already the 6th generation. Leningrad...My Polinka (daughter) is the 7th generation already yes. And the last - my grandchild already is a Finn and the second grandchild is Finnish as well. So, I was living there as an intelligent person in Leningrad...always theatres, museums...I was growing up in museums...] [Inga, 62]

In the case of Inga, whose experience has been described several times before, we may see that the contrast of her living standards was not so strong in contrast to Lyudmila (mentioned before), as Inga married on a Finnish husband who was reliable and prosperous. I may suppose that if Inga would not marry a Finn, she would live Finland and would come back to Leningrad, however, she also could stay and as she said she could “fight for the place in the sun”.

Continuing the topic of the status, I asked my interlocutor what she thinks about the loss of the status upon move to Finland:

[D: Well when a woman moves does she lose her status?

G: She loses, yes. In one moment.] [Galina, 54].

Returning to the question of the status change, I would like to emphasize that a Russian woman who had a good socio economic position before migration may turn into a low status individual after migration to Finland where she suddenly lost all her qualification and professional recognition. This idea sounds opposite to the idea of “gaining” status as Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) which described, that women can gain the status of independence and breadwinner, here, on the contrary, women become economically and even morally dependent on the Finnish husband, which makes him feel dominant.

Moreover, returning to the problem of the lack of opportunities in labour market for newly arrived migrants and low salaries paid due to the lack of demanded required qualifications and skills, according to Finnish standards, the migrants find themselves “caught” in the trap of unemployment and low wages:

[Yes, yes, it is not beneficial to work. Here I worked before, resigned in April-March, I went to Russia for 4 months [...]. They do not allow you to earn, then they can allow you to work as part time, but they hire “their people” for the full time jobs and if they hire you as a full time then it is about a limited number of hours. If someone is sick there is the same. The wage is on the level of social money that is all what you get. [...] I look at my husband’s salary and it is five times higher than mine and the work time is for eight hours and the salary is higher, and I thought that maybe I just need to change a job. And I worked as a cleaner, and I have a good characteristics, it says that I can do everything, but I do not have a diploma of a cleaner, so it makes it difficult.] [Galina, 54].

[D: Are there a lot of opportunities in Finland? Have you met barriers on the labour market or somewhere else?

K: Well yes, you just reach a dead end, I also thought that you can do everything here but it is not like that.] [Katerina, 34]

As we see from the narrations of Galina and Katerina, still, they feel the deficiency of opportunities and feel marginal in the context of labour market. Unfortunately, this places migrant Russian woman in a position of being dependent on her Finnish spouse. Still, Constable (2005) underlined that very often, that a women who migrate because of the reason of marriage, marry on a high status man, wealthy and rich (p.11). However, as the author claimed that the social and economic status of men also may vary (ibid.). Several of my interlocutors repeated this idea in the interviews:

[D: What about the status (social level) of the person, how do you think, only a particular level of men is ready to marry on a Russian woman?

S: The status is very important here as well. So yes, probably...although the cases are different. But Finns in general, those, who marry on Russians they are...do not know...the middle class, do not know.] [Slava, 44]

[The social level is important, there is a cultural level also, also there are “simple” people who do not know what it means – to present a flower, of course it is better to buy a glass of beer [irony], and yes it is like that. So do not try to change, to put it in his head.] [Inga, 62].

Thus, the social and economic statuses of Finnish men who marry on a Russian woman also may vary. In the case of Inga, her husband was an educated person, who worked as an engineer, sometimes abroad, and in the case of Lyudmila he was a part-time worker, who drunk constantly and did not want to work:

[He is ready to take care for me for the whole day...everybody who saw him they say – say “hello” to the best men on the earth, do you understand? And he is in all that...that means love, real love...and this is the substitution of notions...and all other things we are calling “love”.

[...] We are married for 28 years – there is no a rude word for these 28 years, there wasn't any shout from him, it means I live how I want to live Daria, and I wanted to move to Tampere, we have a cottage in Huittinen, and suddenly something changed. I just was travelling and it was like just “enough”, I just wanted to move to the city. So, he bought this flat for me, I have *my own world* here, do you understand? My energy...that what it means – a Finnish man.] [Inga, 62].

[He had fun with women in front of me – so once he broke my arm when he was drunk. He just wanted to drink further. I turned him into human creature ...I came...before me he has been nothing, the pants were hanging, he was unshaven, the clothes was not ironed...and now he walks and boasts, dressed immaculately, perfumed, “I am a king”, and women are hanging on him without any knowledge what he represents in reality. He escaped the work, he was sitting for several month without a job, he had problems with leg, but still, he was all right already. [...] He loves only himself. He dresses himself, loves only himself and buys everything for himself. He broke my arm once being drunk.] [Lyudmila, 55]

Thus, it is obvious that the examples of Inga and Lyudmila are absolutely different, and the socio and economical statuses of their husbands differ. Thus, as Constable (2005) noted, the potential foreign spouses can be poor according to the local standards that is why they seek for a wife from a poorer area (p.11). However, as it turns out in practice that Russian women may bear a higher status than Finnish men. Moreover, such disadvantageous economic position of a Finnish man (as for instance in Lyudmila's case) may indicate the “step-down” for Finnish husbands in contrast to their Russian wives (ibid.). That is why Constable (2005) put in question in what case then the marriages can be considered as hypergamous (ibid.).

Constable (2005) also claimed that the marriage can be built on the ground of transnational fantasies of foreign spouses, how they shape their transnational desires, imaginings and traditions (ibid.). Also the scholar called the cross-border marriages as “marriage-scapes” and

claimed that they are bounded by cultural, social, historical and political contexts (p.4). Other scholars (Mahler and Pessar) have called it the “gendered geographies of power”, that reflects the transnational perspective of mobility (ibid.). All these transnational movements and increased mobility resulted in the construction of the gendered patterns of migration (ibid.). Additionally, it is interesting to regard how the gender settings influence women in the condition of their different social and economic condition with the spouse before their marriage and after. Thus, gender works in multiple spatial and social scales (body, family, state) despite the transnational location (Pessar and Mahler in Nolin, 2006, p.35). Pessar and Mahler attempted to embed gender into transnational focus, pointing out three important elements: “geographical scales, social locations, and power geometries” (ibid). In turn, power geometries are meant to explain how people distribute their power in unequal social relations (Nolin, 2006, p.36). Besides, Nolin (2006) stated that in order to understand the lives of migrants in the right manner, researchers must be aware of gender differences and monitor the categories that are meaningful both to women and men (ibid.).

It is well known that female migration is intensive in contrast to male migration, however, Inga dismissed this argument:

[I: Daria, but the stigma really exists...yes, on all Russian women and men also by the way...

D: But is it expressed on men less?

I: No. You just do not know. (Laughs) I have for example my Finnish friends women they are married Egyptians, and men move here as well.] [Inga, 62].

Thus, we may see that it is impossible to generalize the migration trends upon the factors of social status, motivations and gender perspective. The migratory processes are constant and fluid, with on-going process of globalization of today, changing gendered mind-sets and gender roles and behaviour in the conditions of different locations to generalize the groups of immigrants according particular assumptions would be wrong and easy. There is a need for deep insight into a particular case, and an individual case, which allows us to at least try to find answers on the question what makes Russian women to migrate and marry a foreigner in Finland (or any other country).

“Good character like good soup is usually homemade”¹⁸

¹⁸ Amish proverb

The topic of Russian women's motivations to marry a Finn was also investigated by a Finnish scientist Pelljanen (in Heikkinen, 2013, online). Among all listed characteristics of Russian women which are rather critical (Pelljanen stated that Russian woman marries a Finn in order to obtain a Finnish citizenship, or that they look for men abroad only because the Russian men drink a lot), she concluded that for Russian women the important things in life remain family, motherhood and upbringing of children (ibid.). However, as it was discussed in the theoretical part, the change of the status in the context of motherhood and mothering practices can also be considered as a serious transformation for a Russian woman's gendered practices when she marries a Finn. The author found out that in the mixed families of Russians and Finns the women take a bigger responsibility for children than fathers, but she added that Finnish fathers provide a good care for the children in contrast to Russian fathers (ibid.):

[L: A Finnish woman does not do anything, fathers run for the children, cook and so on.

D: Russians will not behave like that.

L: Yes, true.][Lyudmila, 55]

[D: And in Finland it is usually the father who takes care for children?

S: Yes, fathers are engaged in activities with children. The model comes from mother and plus the community is absorbed with the idea of family life.] [Slava, 44]

[D: But I heard and even saw that fathers who devote their all free time to their families.

K: Well yes, Finns also have a lot of hobbies. They are fond of many things and sometimes they even can skip something and children are lost, parents are just irresponsible sometimes. Although yes, as you said, fathers are active about upbringing of children, it is a domination role in the family and they are busy with kids. Also they do not share children, even if they divorced, then still they spend equal time with children, but may be the mother spends more, yes.] [Katerina, 34]

Thus, from the narrations of interlocutors we may observe a striking difference between the behaviour of Russian and Finnish men. If in Russia men are supposed to earn and sponsor the family, in Finland a father also performs a parenthood/mothering practices. However, again, it would be wrong to generalize as Russian fathers also take care of their children. Stereotypical images of the roles in Russian families also hinder Russian men from taking initiative to care for their children active as Finnish fathers do. Vuorinen (2003) noted that Finnish women make too much effort to be equal with men that is why men forget to treat women as "women" in the whole sense of the word (p.84). My informants expressed the idea of a lack of care from the side of a Finnish man, one of my informants claimed that she got used to be treated in a

very cold way by the husband and thus, it is also possible to speak here about the change of the status and self-determination, as Russian women become emancipated in Finland:

[K: Well, there is a question of consistency and what is common and uncommon. It says more about their practicality, and flowers - no. To present flowers and chocolate is not accepted. But actually, if he wants to continue relationships, so he has to pay for his woman.] [Katerina, 34].

[The roles changed – the women’s purpose has changed. Women buy flowers for themselves by their own today.] [Nina, 51].

[D: My friend, for example, for a long time tried to get flowers from her boyfriend, a foreigner, after six months it happened – how do you think what is it – mentality, culture or upbringing?

O: I do not know why they do that. I do not know, I was so surprised... [...]. My husband’s brother was indignant because one guy presented a key (jewellery) to one girl in order she will have friendship with him and he was so indignant – a key to a girl in order she communicates with him.

(We are laughing)

I told, “What else he can present?”...well flowers. And I told one Finn about him and he said “Well yes it is right; it is a key to heart”. I think that if someone doesn’t want to pay, so he creates different stories.] [Oksana, 48].

However, the examples of Anna and Inga are different in this sense when the women did not feel a lack of care and attention from the side of Finnish men:

[We went to Stockholm in the shops, he paid for everything. We were back from Estonia and went after a while in Bulgaria and Canaries. He pays!] [Anna, 56]

[I: Yes. European men got used to women who are self-sufficient, independent, also women got used to work and there is absolute equality, and it is unforeseen to wait something from a man. When *he* came to me at the first time with candies and flowers, in 1983... There was nothing in the shops Daria (*laughs*). So, yeah...

D: A good man. (Laughs)

I: Well yes, candies and flowers...yes, we ate caviar with spoons and drunk champagne and had a lot of nice clothes, but after a while men started to bring what we needed. But we didn’t say “What the hell you brought me?!” (With irony) No.] [Inga, 62].

Goulbourne, Reynolds, Solomos and Zontini (2010) paid attention to the problem of unfulfilled expectations in transnational marriage (p.142-163). The authors developed the topic of expectations from the example of Caribbean couples, which include “established” and “newly arrived” immigrants. They claimed that despite a shared cultural heritage and origin,

still, these couples have conflicts because of differences in the visions of the partnership and marriage (ibid., p.159). Moreover, scholars underlined the factor of different *cultural attitudes around gender roles* that cause conflicts and clashes (ibid.). I see the similarities between the cases of Caribbean migrants residing in Britain and the problem of conflicting mutual expectations between Finnish and Russian spouses.

Goulbourne et al., (2010) claimed that the tensions within the transnational marriage may be caused by the social class of newly arrived migrants (ibid.). Moreover, the host Finnish family may perceive a Russian migrant as suspicious, having, as scholars called it “hidden agendas” (ibid., p.162). However, in the case of my Russian interlocutors there were not cases of hostile attitude from the side of Finnish family.

Returning to the issue of expectations of duties it is interesting to give an insight in the gender role distribution and the role of Finnish men:

[I said recently – boil potatoes, he did it but boiled potatoes with these little plants on potatoes. And being at the age of 67 he finally learnt to cook. Mother did everything for him. It is guilt of his mother. When he was in Sochi he got the idea to present the flowers. He likes to spend money, he brings food, and we eat together.] [Anna, 56]

It is an interesting fact however, that if a man in Finland is used to perform household duties independently from woman and equally with woman, and then why does the order in the Finnish family retain some traits of patriarchal society peculiar to Russian families? Still, in this case a woman is responsible for household duties and performs a traditional role in the family despite all the aims to achieve equality in Finland. For example in the case of Anna, her Finnish boyfriend never cooked for himself – his mother did it all the time.

Another contradictory moment in the perspective of mutual expectations is revealed by Nina:

[The difference between a Finn and a Russian also in that, that in Russian marriages – everything is common. In Finnish marriages everyone pays for himself – and I have a question – why do we need a family then? If a Finn does not pay, it is already an indication, but I can say that all Finns are different.] [Nina, 51]

Thus, this topic has been discussed before in the thesis, however, it is possible to underline once again that the topic of “sharing” is very important for Russian women. Indeed, in Russian society it is accepted that spouses have a common property and financial sources which are shared equally. In the Finnish context spouses may have separate bank accounts and even divide the food and material things.

[Perhaps. Everything depends on the family; my husband had a model of his father. Moreover, I observed several times as Finnish spouses – both pay for themselves. So that is separation, which is perceived here in a normal way.][Katerina, 34]

[S: They can have two shelves and it is normal here, everyone has his own shelf. And he puts his food on the one shelf and she places her food on another.

D: For Russia it is nonsense.

S: Yes...but in general you feel yourself in such marriage uncomfortably, you take this image – the image of the “worker”, you become closed. You accept this image psychologically.] [Slava, 44]

Vuorinen noted that in Soviet-Russian and Finnish societies the attitudes towards individualism and collectivism were different (Vuorinen, 2003, p.80). The networks, families and relatives were formed as very important social spaces of the everyday life in Soviet Union and still now they are considered as such (ibid.). The author underlined the idea that the women who marry Finnish men need the husband’s support especially in the beginning of her stay in Finland, thus the idea of sharing and providing is indispensable here (ibid., 81).

Upbringing, culture or mentality: Do we need to change each other?

In my discussions with Russian interlocutors we were considering the topic of cultural and gender differences between foreign spouses and possible conflicts stemming from that. I was asking them what was the reason for this or that pattern of behaviour of a Finnish husband, and if the mismatching of cultural and gender behaviour may result into clash in transnational family. What factors make a Finn behave in a particular way – is it his upbringing, culture or mentality? I also asked them if Russian wives have to try to change their Finnish spouses or to adapt themselves to their standards of living.

In the beginning of this thesis I attempted to regard the problematic of mutual expectations in transnational marriage. I supposed that the mutual visions of Finnish men and Russian women are stereotyped in many ways – society, media, and so on. Still upon their arrival to Finland, Russian women retain their identity and ethnic background that cannot be ignored. Thus, the idea of “cultural scripts” mentioned before is rather important in this case (Javier Trevi-O, 2003, p.89). As cultural scripts are involved in our everyday construction of selves and our identities, thus it directly influences on our expectations in relations with other people (ibid.). Again as Goffman stated:

“The projections of self in everyday life are made up in large part by culturally prescribed enactments of basic social attributes such as class, gender and age.” (Javier Trevi-O, 2003, p.89).

Thus, from the perspective of mutual misunderstandings and possible clashes I connect gender and culture as two mechanisms that can be intertwined in the process of mutual misunderstandings that cause conflict. Moreover, I suppose that these mechanisms are connected; moreover, the mechanisms of gender are conditioned by the culture.

However, amongst the factors of culture and gender, the Russian interlocutors named other factors such as upbringing, family background, and the personality of the individual:

[G: And they do not ask – “can we or we cannot to come”, they know that they can come, so we don’t have difficulties and here you have to call one month in advance, one month (*she underlined), [...] I mean, that whether you want or you don’t want you have to accept them.

D: Is it culture or mentality?

G: Culture (*firmly).

Or mentality. (We are laughing). I do not know. But I think they...just create useless things.] [Galina, 54]

Inga also claimed that the conflict in family is based not on the ground of culture. She considered such cases as a matter of personality and upbringing of individual and there is no sense to change the spouse:

[I: So do not try to change, to put something in the head. Do not do. My opinion is like that: I am not going to change you, but also I am not going to accept you as you are. Thus, you give the choice to a person – if he wants to change or he doesn’t want. But if you set firm frames to him - “change because I do not like that and I got used to another” – and he will answer to you: “But I got used to other things”.

D: Thus we have a conflict?

I: of course...but it is not an international ethnic (cultural) conflict, it is just the conflict of personality, human conflict, do you understand?] [Inga, 62]

[D: Does everything depend on the person?

I: Yes. It depends on the person, and also on the upbringing. Upbringing is an important factor, what he experienced in his childhood that will be reflected in further adult life.][Inga, 62]

[D: Or it is the factor of upbringing? Education?

I: The difference firstly, is in the upbringing, but the education...it is just a profession...the knowledge, deeply rooted in a very narrow area...you know, the doctor may not to understand anything in the computer and the IT specialist in the medicine.] [Inga, 62]

[There are a lot of factors...culture, plus character, plus upbringing and the roots. It is useless to try to change.] [Nina, 51]

[D: But the mentality is based on the culture...

S: Yes, so like that, but there is the sense. I suppose it is based on the personal level, it is interpersonal conflict.] [Slava, 44]

[Depends on the person and his upbringing. I was lucky, yes. I also know one case, one Finn, our mate; he just left his girlfriend at the hospital, when she needed his help. So, of course it is about upbringing.] [Katerina, 34]

Thus, we may see that the majority of women refer more to the factor of personality and upbringing of the Finnish man than culture. They practically did not mention the factor of culture or gender as the prerequisite for clashes in transnational marriage. It refers us to the question, however, if we need to change a person or not, or being migrants in the host country we have to adapt ourselves and accept a vulnerable position?

[D: How do you think, is it necessary to teach Finn if you are Russian women?

A: If you love, you need to keep calm, to teach. In my case his mother did everything for him – she even was dragging the water.] [Anna, 56]

[I: Don't try to change.

D: Okay, to direct?

I: Yes, you can tell may be to him, but the matter is that we are half Asians, we are from Eurasia yes. We have Asian mentality. [...] And Asian mentality and Asian men, our Russian, got used to completely to different things– so how they live in Asia – a men should and he knows it – he has to take care of women, to sponsor her, entertain and so on.] [Inga, 62]

[I: If you see that a person is not going to change, just leave, understand? Because a person, who is not going to change will break you. You will start to knuckle under him if you fall in love with him, understand? So do not start to knuckle under him.] [Inga, 62]

[I teach him, direct and remind. We are watching Russian channels, he is learning.] [Nina, 51]

[If the woman marries a country, even if they do not like and still they go and marry and after they suffer. I do not think it is possible to change him, do not think so.] [Slava, 44]

[You should not change the *culture*.] [Katerina, 34]

The majority of Russian respondents were against any attempts to change a foreign husband. In turn, such attempts may provoke the conflict even more in the transnational family. Inga, for instance, explained the misunderstandings between foreign spouses in terms of “scripts” of

foreign spouses. I see the connection of the idea of Inga, with the idea of “cultural scripts” mentioned before.

[And it is very silly to give your lectures. She has one thing in the head and her husband does not know about it, he just does not know what he has to do at the moment- to stand or to turn (irony). He is not aware and it has never occurred to her that he is not aware of her way of thinking – her script. But he has another script, and we call it “*conflicts in international marriages*”.] [Inga, 62]

Inga refers to the idea that foreign spouses may have different behavioural and cultural settings, their own worldview that was formed in different cultures, however, the claims of informants about such factors as upbringing, personality and mentality which reject the idea of culture as a factor of conflicts, contradicts to her point of view.

[The difference of cultures... If you are ready to accept, to learn another culture – there will not be conflicts, but if you think that: “We do not have like that, and it should be everywhere like we have” so it does not work, and there are a lot of such people.] [Inga, 62]

Thus, the idea of complete rejection of culture as a factor for conflicts seems unconvincing. Thus it is possible to suppose, that it is the whole set of factors which influence on the relations in the transnational marriage – cultural, gender, personal traits, upbringing and mentality.

In our discussion with Inga, certainly, we touched upon the topic of expectations in transnational marriage, where she claimed that expectations are unnecessary and the way of “learning” the culture is more interesting:

[So that is the problem that a person is waiting for something. Why somebody should wait for something? When I came here I didn’t expect anything, absolutely nothing, because why should I wait for something? I just learnt more and more.] [Inga, 62]

Although Inga stated that she did not anticipate anything, still, she had her cultural and gender settings, as she described her cultural background and personal position in attitude to the relationships precisely. Moreover, she claimed that she was looking for a *good father* for her daughter, which can be interpreted as expectation, another matter is what she puts in this notion of “a good father”, what qualities of a Finnish man. Thus, I suppose that our expectations are formed unconsciously, but still they are predetermined by cultures, in the conditions of which gendered behaviour (cultural values, norms and beliefs shape the gender roles within particular racial-ethnic communities (Miville, 2013, p.10-11), mentality and personal traits are formed.

“Sham marriages”: Stereotypes and stigma

More assumptions concerning the motivations of migrant marriages emerge. Scholars claim that migrant marriages are strategic and aimed at the attainment of the residence permit or some other official permission for settlement more often than, additionally, they noted that the motive of family building or intimate relationships can be considered only as “cover stories”. As Charsley (2012) noted: “migrant marriages become judged as the product of rational choices to promote social and economic advantage rather than establish intimate partnerships” (p.27).

The motivations for migration for Russian women to Finland were partially discussed already in the paragraph “We fought for “a place in the sun” of the first chapter which links us to the present part. In the first part I discussed particularly the stereotypical motivation for migration of Russian women as individuals, but here I refer more to the context of family.

According to “Statistic Finland” the statistical data gives evidence to the argument of the increasing tendencies for the feminization of migration of Russian women in Finland: according to statistics (Statistics Finland, Families by Nationality of woman/man, Year, Family type and Age of woman/ man, online) ¹⁹ for 2012 the amount of Russian women officially got married Finnish spouse constitutes 3,332, while for men - 1,221.

The indicated numbers confirm that the tendencies of migration for Russian female migrants are more intensive than for the male migrants. In connection to the feminization of migration the stereotypes regarding women begin to emerge in the host countries. In the case of Russian women it is more often connected with the stereotype of obtaining a citizenship in a Western country. Very often the marriages, which are driven by the aim of obtaining of the permission for settlement or residence, are marked as “*sham marriages*” (Charsley, 2012, p.10). However, as Williams stated that the lack of the official status of one of the spouses is a prerequisite of the border marriage (ibid., p.24).

The issue of the feminization of the migration is also an important issue today; the flows of cross border marriages are considered to be female-dominated today that creates the imbalance between the number of grooms and brides (Charsley, 2012, p. 26). As a consequence, the new forms of the gender norms in the sphere of migration were created. It includes stricter rules for the entry and procedures of obtaining official permission for residence.

¹⁹ The age of the spouses was not taken into account

Furthermore, the problem of the assumptions surrounding women as “typical”²⁰ migrants should draw more attention as more often cross – border migrants are stereotyped (Charsley, 2012, p. 26). What is interesting is that other groups of Russian female immigrants such as workers and academics are not seen as “typical”. When some of Russian women from Tampere (and my interlocutors) were told that I am a Master’s student who is doing the research they immediately pronounced: “Oh, then of course, for you it is different. Another matter.” By saying “another matter” they meant the differences in our social statuses. They reflected on my independence here in Finland, in contrast to their dependence on their Finnish husbands and husbands’ dominant position.

As Malkki stated, in this light, “migrants, especially women migrants, may be seen as a kind of “pollution” within the nation” (Malkki, 1995, in Charsley, 2012, p.28).

Moreover the media supports many stereotypes – some of my informants underlined that as well:

[Because we were already “popular” and covered in the newspapers here ...we were described as prostitutes here. [...] It was written – “A poor Finnish “poika”,²¹ a naïve one, a tourist. And suddenly this “Russian mad shark”, a prostitute, came and swallowed him”. The opinion about Russian women who cross the border is common.] [Inga, 62]

Such perceptions that Russian women hold of themselves, images created by media and subsequent opinions of Finnish society contribute to the construction of the stereotypes. Consequently, it generates discomfort in the host societies and the conditions of adaptation and livelihood for newly arrived migrants become challenging.

Goffman (2009) defines *stigma* as “bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier” (p.1). The author claimed that the routines and social intercourse in established settings allow us to deal with anticipated others without special attention. He underlined that when we meet a stranger, then we are supposed to predetermine the category of the object and his/her attributes, his “social identity” (including personal attributes and qualities) (ibid.). Thus, we rely on our anticipations we have and then transform them into normative expectations, which in turn result in demands towards the stranger (Goffman, 2009, p.2). We create these demands unconsciously, and we notice them only when we question ourselves as they were fulfilled or not (ibid.). Thus we make

²⁰ Here by the word “typical” I mean sarcastic expression for female migrant from Russia, who are considered as “usual” Russian migrant, seen in a stereotypical way.

²¹ “boy” in Finnish

assumptions as to what the individual before us ought to be (ibid.). Goffman also distinguished three types of stigma, according to: body defects (physical damaged), character traits as a weak will, and the third type of stigma is devoted to race, nation and religion (ibid.). The attitude to a stigmatized person is well-known and it is characterized as compassion, moreover a person marked by stigma is not considered as a human person (Goffman, 2009, p.5). Thus, it results in the discrimination towards stigmatized person and his marginal self-conscious and a lack of life benefits in the society (ibid.). I refer the case of Russian female immigrants residing in Finland as the third type of stigma. In our discussions, the interlocutors told me that more often they were stigmatized as Russian prostitutes who came to Finland in order to get a citizenship:

[G: I did not understand the language, there was the word *ilo*, if to translate in Russian, it means *prostitute* and *illoin* means *cheerful*.

D: "Happy".

G: "Happy" yes. And when I was said "*Oh, ilo nainen*"; I kept thinking that it meant "a cheerful woman", I smiled all the time. One day I just realized [...].][Galina, 54]

Thus in the example of Galina, we see that Finnish people considered her as a prostitute without any attempts to hide the meaning of the Finnish word phrase, by which they marked the interlocutor.

Such assumptions of Finnish society may categorize Russian migrants as a "typical" group of migrants (mentioned before). It is wrong to claim that Russian women are stigmatized according to their outer appearances. All Russian women whom I met were wearing trousers and there were no indications of sexual hints. I described their appearances in the beginning of the thesis. I suppose such perception of Finnish society is connected what Swidler called "cultural attributes", "cultural elements" (in Vertovec, 2009, p.72-73). She defined "cultural attributes" as "a set of resources from which people construct diverse strategic action day to day" (ibid). And the author also stated that people are involved in everyday activities by "selecting certain cultural elements and investing them with particular meanings in concrete life circumstances" (ibid.). Thus, presenting your cultural elements in the host culture and society we already transmit our cultural meanings into the host society what may produce different types of response from it. It also may be connected with the cultural practices and linguistic practices such as language.

Thus I suppose that the assumptions of Finnish society regarding Russian immigrant women in Finland are based on the Finnish media and particular cases, which have been generalized.

However, I noticed, that within Russian community in Finland Russian immigrants perceive each other in a negative way and there is no such cooperation and support amongst the Russian diaspora in Finland. Here it is possible to refer to the phenomena of *individualism* (Goulbourne et al., 2010, p, 82-93). Scholars claimed that individualism gives an opportunity for a more personal autonomy, but at the same time it contributes to the fragmentation of families and communities that I have been observed (ibid.). I noticed that Russian immigrants in Finland support each other more or less. They prefer to keep information about possible benefits on the labour market, about language courses and certainly they prefer to stay silent about their personal life in discussions with each other. Very often it is also dictated by the wish to detach yourself from the Russian community in order to adapt in Finnish society and learn the Finnish language:

[G: That is, I've been talking with Russians; actually I have not talked to Russians so far. I do not talk to Russians.

D: Intentionally or by accident?

G: At first I thought that because of the language, Russian ... it bothers me. I do not have Russian TV channels. I still learn Finnish. I still try to make it perfect. And if I had Russian channels I wouldn't know Finnish at all.] [Galina, 54].

Katerina also claimed that it would be wrong to bring your own culture in the host society:

[Mmm...I learnt the English language. I speak in English, I try to speak in Finnish, but it is still difficult. Well actually we speak in English. I also was missing Russian TV for one year, but I said myself, that I have to stop to watch Russian TV and that I have to involve in this culture. And also one important moment – that you cannot bring your culture with yourself, I mean to impose it.] [Katerina, 34]

Thus, Katerina and Galina for instance see the need for transformations of their own cultures and the need for learning Finnish, what indicates that Russian immigrants' wish to adapt in Finland.

In the connection with the factors of stereotypical images and stigma our discussion with informants led us to the topic of discrimination. I asked my informants if they experienced discrimination directed at them in Finland. In continuation of the topic of stigma of "prostitute" Galina shared her opinion about *discrimination*:

[D: Well how do you think –can it be attributed to discrimination or not? What is this?

G: It's not discrimination, no. That is a desire probably ... Maybe they have been for a long time under the Russian yoke. We conquered Vyborg. Or maybe internally, they know, they think we are smarter than they, and they often want to humiliate or belittle us.] [Galina, 54]

Nina also shared her experience of discrimination:

[When we went to the car with husband and from my side a drunk Finnish man came to us and he started to bother us. He said to my husband: “You! You have to give me a ride” and so on and my husband answered: “Why do I have to?”, so that men continued to murmur something and I was angry and I said to him in Russian “Listen, get out of here!”, and if you saw his face...He was so scared, he squeezed and was shivering ...And then, do you know what did he do? He came to the husband’s car window stood there, turned his ass to him and took off his pants! So you should judge.] [Nina, 51]

However in this case it would be wrong to claim that it was exactly the case of discrimination. Probably, such behaviour of a Finnish man has not been caused by the discriminatory attitudes but rather his alcohol intoxication.

[D: Have you met cases of the discrimination towards Russians?

L: Discrimination is in its blossom; they pay less, even at my work.

D: How is that?

L: They just do not want to pay, and when the Finnish intern came who was 16 years old... They paid her a wage which is double higher than mine, and I got just nothing, it is not beneficial here to work, it is more advantageous to be unemployed and to get the social payment which is double than working wage. I got more in Russia while I was working there.] [Lyudmila, 55]

Ben-Rafael and Sternberg (2009), studied the Russian-Jewish diaspora in Israel stated that although the institutional discrimination towards Russian immigrants is not so intensive, still, the attitudes towards their professional competence and their “Soviet mentality” does not allow them to engage and excludes them from the labour market (p.278). The authors continue that practically in all host societies and cultures Russians retain their dual social identity who associate these immigrants with the negative media images of “Russian mafia”, “Russian ethnic violence” and “Russian sex workers” (ibid., p.279).

Although the majority of my Russian interlocutors stated that they have not experienced the cases of discrimination from the Finnish side, and, in general the attitude to the immigrants is polite in Finland:

[D: No discrimination here?

L: No, I have not experienced discrimination. Basically, everybody treat you normally. We even became friends with a neighbour. All depends on the attitude to the world. They are trusting and honest and believe in the word.] [Lena, 37].

[D: Okay, did you meet the cases of discrimination in relation to Russians here and particularly to yourself?

K: The news is presented here differently. And if to speak about discrimination...no, there were not any episodes and just the matter is that you have to behave yourself as a normal person and not like a pig. On the other hand they do not give a possibility to express yourself in a full extent. I mean they have rules, and they do not cross the boundaries of this "box".] [Katerina, 34]

The interlocutors mentioned several cases of linguistic discrimination. This type of discrimination supposes that the immigrants may suffer from discriminatory attitudes for the reason of speaking a native language in a host country:

[I know one interesting couple. She was married with a Finn and he told her that she had to speak in Finnish. And she shouted: "I will speak in Russian!"] [Oksana, 48]

[D: And also there is a thing that a husband prohibits his wife and children to speak in Russian, he demands them to speak in Finnish.

K: I do not understand it at all. If you marry on a foreigner, be prepared, that a child will be bilingual. I think it disrespectful. And in general, you have to talk about that with your child. And there is a need to talk about culture; you should tell a child that he has two cultures. We raise them. And afterwards we speak about discrimination and about cases when somebody teases a child. We need to talk about that.] [Katerina, 34]

Such cases may be regarded as the violation of linguistic rights of the individual. Today, as Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson and Rannut (1995) claimed many groups are deprived of linguistic rights of human, what indicates existing inequality and linguistic injustice. The authors underlined that mostly the minority communities who are exposed to the diminishing of their linguistic rights (ibid., p.3). Moreover, the unwillingness of majority (or host community) to provide space for realization are based on two assumptions – firstly, that it may cause a threat to the state and another problem is its influence on the state's economy (ibid., p.4). Moreover, granting rights for the expression of linguistic and cultural rights contributes to the autonomy and independence of minority groups in terms of culture and language (ibid., p.5-6). In turn it may cause an increase of minorities' influence on the state and even may lead to the disintegration (ibid.). However in the context of Finnish-Russian transnational families such cases of behaviour from the part of the Finnish husband may be regarded as the manifestation of the head role in the family and his domination. The problem of moral oppression of Russian immigrant wives by Finnish husbands was considered in the part devoted to the "Mutual expectations in Finnish-Russian transnational families", where I discussed the problem of domination and power of a Finnish husband in Russian-Finnish family. Following from that it is possible to say that the stereotypical images of foreign wives, their vulnerable position in the host society caused by the status of being an immigrant (who is

exposed to the adaptation challenges and lack of opportunities and benefits, at least at first) contribute to the dependence on the foreign husband, who may impose his power and restrict the immigrant woman's autonomy.

Transnational involvement: integration in Finland

The relationships between the host society and the immigrant may be characterized in terms of *integration*. It is interesting to know to what extent female Russian immigrants become integrated into Finnish society being married to a Finn and still maintaining communication with the Russian community? What factors influence on the process and quality of integration of Russian females? Do Russian immigrants keep connection with their family members, by what means? How are integration and transnationalism connected? All these questions will be regarded in this part, where I also attempt to describe the experiences of transnational involvement of the Russian female migrants in Finnish society.

Being a transnational actor, a migrant is involved in the transnational processes of maintenance of connections across borders in spheres of economy, social and political spheres (Jayaweera in Charsley, 2012, p.82). Jayaweera noted that the notion of integration was defined differently from the notions of assimilation and multiculturalism (in Charsley, 2012, p.81). Spencer defined *integration* as “ a process of interaction between migrants and the individuals and institutions of the receiving society that facilitate economic, social, cultural and civic participation and an inclusive sense of belonging at the national and local level” (Spencer, 2011 in Charsley, 2012, p. 81-82). However, the author underlined that there was a gap in the definitions of the term of “integration” and in general lack of understanding of the policies for process of integration and its effects (Spencer, 2011, p.12). As I regard Russian female immigrants as transnational actors, thus, the process of integration in transnational perspective may be considered as transnational involvement of immigrants in receiving, Finnish society. In this connection it is important to distinguish between the notions of “transnational activities” and “transnational identification”, where the first includes activities that are performed across borders with the place of origin (e.g. remittances) and the second expresses the identification of the migrant with his/her place of origin (Jayaweera, 2008 in Charsley, 2012, p.82). Jayaweera (in Charsley) underlined the idea that the transnational activities and identification may hinder the integration processes of immigrants in the host societies (ibid.). Hence, there is a dilemma for immigrants – how to deal with their dual belonging and combine the process of maintaining connections with their original country during their integration. In connection with that Jayaweera emphasized that the period of

residence in the host country may influence the way how the migrant balance these two processes, besides, she underlined that it also depends on personal factors (in Charsley, 2012, pp.82-83). Moreover, the process of integration can be varied in character and different in the time frames for each actor. The involvement in the host society, the participation in different organizations, engagement in the labour market, religion organizations, unions, health organizations, safety organizations, is different for established immigrants resided in Finland long time ago (ibid.). In the interviews I asked the immigrant women how they would characterize the first period of integration and adaptation in Finland, their responses varied and included negative characterization as well as positive experiences. The Russian interlocutors' responds that the integration process was mainly positive:

[D: How was your adaptation?

A: It was fine, people were interested, and they wanted to listen.] [Anna, 56]

Other interlocutors Nina and Lyudmila expressed boredom upon arrival to Finland:

[The first six months were difficult. There was a lack of activity, I felt bored, we sent a daughter at school, what is interesting, she said, "I will be here until 17 years old and then I will leave."] [Nina, 51].

[Nothing special...Just went to the Finnish courses...then just started to communicate with Russians here.] [Lyudmila, 55].

But still, practically all immigrants maintained connections (or performed "transnational activities") through borders with their relatives.

The constant communication and visits are important for the maintenance of family ties, especially with children. As Galina said still, she does not feel herself lonely, as she knows that she has family.

[Well, my mother, she is often in Skype and she wouldn't be able to communicate with children like she communicates with us – it is like if she would have been here. [...] [Oksana, 48]

However, extracts from the interviews demonstrate that transnational activities do not hinder the process of integration in these cases, in contrast, they facilitate it. The communication of Russian interlocutors with their family members in Russia does not prevent them from learning Finnish and their attempts to become active on the labour market and in social

activities. Thus, we may see that the process of integration is performed differently and it depends on personal perceptions and intentions of the immigrants:

[O: The opposite...there are a lot of opportunities. Here I started to do ballroom dancing again. I did before also, but in Russia in order to do that you have to start very early, you have to have a level. But here you can dance ballet as well. And here there is ballet for adults. [...]

D: A person just needs a proper hobby?

O: Yes, you are welcome, people do sport, dancing. If you want - travel, if you don't want...well I don't know, if people say it is boring here...there are so many things in Finland to do...I just don't know what person needs.] [Oksana, 48]

On the other hand the diasporas and networks of immigrants retain their diaspora consciousness (Vertovec, 2009, p.6). Russian community can be considered as a transnational social formation. Tarrow claimed that transnational social movements and social networks are characterized by trust, reciprocity and collective identity (in Vertovec, 2009, p.41). Thus I believe that the active participation of Russian immigrant within the transnational formation of Russian club may partially hinder the integration as migrants stay within ethnic and social boundaries of their ethnic community and do not engage in interaction and activities of the host society.

As Spencer noted, integration is not a single process, and "takes place across economic, social, cultural and political domains" (Spencer, 2011, p.203). The process of integration can be characterized as a collaborative process – from the side of immigrants and from the host society, in some countries the determination of the integration capacity is a one-sided process as more often the policies adopted by the state define if the migrant was integrated successfully, and if not - it is considered as the immigrant's fault (ibid.). As one of the interlocutors reflected, in perspective of Russian migrants in Finland two sides even in the emotional and cultural perspective should fulfil the integration process:

[Finns claim always "We will never tell anybody anything, nobody tells anything to each other", they don't want to understand that Russians understand the situation in another way, they are stubborn, and they do what they do, and they cannot make their worldview wider, they consider that it is right what they do.] [Oksana, 48]

Every day more attention is paid to the measures of testing the ability of the marriage immigrants to adapt and integrate into the host society. The testing of the knowledge of the language of the host country is one of the main requirements that prove the ability of the immigrant to integrate successfully into the host society.

D: And Finnish? Did you learn it or not?

I: No, I decided not to learn...I have been several times on courses, but it didn't go, I couldn't get the vocabulary.

D: And how did you communicate with Finnish friends?

I: In English... [Inga, 62]

[D: When you just moved, how was your adaptation? Did you have stress?

G: No, there was no stress.

I even tried one psychological test, I didn't have stress. I would like to underline that I have a very good husband, one in the million probably. He is a Finn, but he is different, we were chatting absolutely about everything. We started to speak in German language.

D: In German?

G: Yes. We spoke in German. He didn't speak Russian, I didn't not speak Finnish. [...] So a common language we started with - German. And when I moved to live here, he told me that we will live here, and it would be necessary to speak Finnish.

D: How did you take it?

G: Normally, if it is necessary- fine, I went at school, the bigger part I learned not at the courses but at home, I took my book and also asked him, he explained [...]. I do not know the cases or declensions, I perceive mostly by hearing, the spoken (slang) language is different from the book language, just as we have, and it's another language, slang they speak. Turku and Pori have a completely different kind of ... I don't understand them. In the north, in Lapland they have a completely different kind of dialect, already mixed with the Swedish and the Norwegian languages.] [Galina, 54]

[D: So you moved to Finland, was it difficult for you? Can you underline something specific about culture, society? Did you have problems with learning the language?

O: Well, I learnt the language fast. With the help of husband.] [Oksana, 48]

[When you come here, firstly it seems that everything is alright, but the problems with the language begin later and the dependence on the husband as well. The woman should be strong mentally and emotionally.] [Slava, 44]

The majority of my interlocutors did not have problems with learning Finnish or they just spoke in English or German with their husbands. They learned the Finnish language not only by means of courses, but also with the help of their Finnish spouses. Only Slava reflected on the idea that the language can become a real obstacle during integration.

To sum up, this chapter explores various obstacles, which Russian women overcome after their arrival and settlement in Finland. The topics described here vary but they reveal the

realities of Russian female immigrants' experiences who decided to take a step and marry a foreigner.

There are many assumptions concerning the motives of Russian women for coming to Finland and marrying a Finnish man. More often public opinion connects such motivations with the factor of economy and a right for unrestricted mobility. The idea of true love nowadays is seemed as a false justification, what also creates wrong, stereotypical images of Russian immigrant women. Such aspirations of Russian women were conceptualized by the term of global hypergamy by scholars, which affirms that the motives of immigrant women are dictated only by the aims of benefits in a cross border marriage.

In the case of Russian interlocutors, this idea has been challenged and it is possible to observe contradictions to the statement of pure economic gain as the reason for migration. Furthermore, the stereotypical and stigma images contributed to the creation of images of Russian women who migrated to Finland. Such images of Russian female migrants led to the perception of them as a "typical" group of migrants. However not only stereotypical images contribute to the emergence of conflicts in transnational families but also the mutual expectations which are formed from different cultural attitudes around gender roles. The constructed cultural views and gender expectations may lead to the conflict in the transnational Russian-Finnish family. However, after analysis of the interlocutors' opinions I concluded that exactly the factors of personality and upbringing play a great role in the construction of attitudes and behaviours.

However, the idea of complete rejection of culture as a factor for conflicts seems unpersuasive as I refer to the idea of "cultural scripts", which automatically involves the idea of culture's influence.

Thus it is possible to suppose, that it is the whole set of factors which influence on the relations in the transnational marriage – cultural, gender, personal traits, upbringing and mentality.

The last topic in the chapter was devoted to the notion of integration. Describing it I attempted to reflect the Russian immigrants' experiences of adaptation upon their arrival in Finland. Besides, I revealed the main challenges of integration in Finland my interlocutors faced. It is possible to conclude that the process of integration is shaped by many factors – by the policies of the state, the period of residence of immigrant, by knowledge of the language of the host country, by personal motivations and initiative of an immigrant, by his/her connection with the

place of origin and maintaining contact with the local Russian community/network and so on. Additionally, in the perspective of transnationalism integration is supposed to be challenged by the dual belonging and attachment of the migrant to the sending country and his/her transnational activities across borders. However, extracts from the interviews demonstrate that transnational activities do not affect on the integration in these cases. The communication of the Russian interlocutors with their family members in Russia does not prevent them from learning Finnish and their attempts to involve on the labour market and in social activities. Thus, we may see that the process of integration are performed differently and the depended on personal perceptions and intentions of the immigrants.

Conclusion

This research was devoted to the cross-cultural marriage of Russian women in Finland and their Russian-Finnish transnational families. The main task was to investigate the main research topics: mutual expectations as the possible prerequisite for conflicts in the transnational family, the factors of gender and cultural differences (cultural misunderstandings) in the basis for mutual expectations, the gender order of Russia and Finland, the historical events of the past which influence the contemporary perceptions of both nations.

All these investigated areas also led me to the study the relevant themes: motivations and reasons for Russian women's migration to Finland; the Finnish-Russian transnational couples with different, conflicting conceptualizations of family and gendered roles; Russian women's experiences of integration and stigmatized images; the building of the networks and maintaining transnational contact with family members; the influence of cross-border marriage and transnationalism on the lives and experiences of Russian interlocutors, their identity and change of their practices of family construction; the influence on the family left in the place of origin.

The main task of this chapter is to conclude my historical, transnational and anthropological journey into the phenomenon of Finnish-Russian transnational families and to present the main findings of the research.

Throughout the thesis I investigated how the people of different cultural backgrounds, from different countries (although neighbouring) built their family lives, negotiate their meanings and practices in the understanding of cultures, as well as gendered patterns of behaviour.

However, my research was focused mainly on the female transnational actors – Russian women. I concentrated mainly on Russian women’s representations of gender roles, but it does not mean that I eliminated the Finnish men from the study. As I focus on Russian women resided in Finland, I describe the gender order from their perspective. Here I follow the already changed (modified) gender practices and models (changed from the times of their being in Russia) after living in Finland for some time; also the men’s roles are mostly presented through narratives and contexts of Russian women.

In the chapters devoted to transnationalism and transnational families, it was mentioned that the shift of transnationalism in migration studies from the multidisciplinary discourse allowed the interpreting of the notion “transnational” in a new perspective and as a separate theme. In turn the interpretation of immigrants and their practices changed, they were not regarded as “anomalies” anymore, rather as cosmopolitans. With these changes, attention also was paid to the sphere of family as important dimension in migration studies, which may resemble many important things about the migratory practices of immigrants. Family is an interesting field for study, as a big part of it involves the study of the emotional aspect, the care and love – these human qualities that are particular to everyone. However, it is interesting to study them in the transnational perspective – how people construct these meanings, how they adapt them to the transnational conditions. The focus on families in migration studies allows also not only to trace the migratory trends and formation of transnational networks but also to reflect on the positive and negative side of migration for individual in particular contexts.

There is a wide spread assumption in the public imagination as well, as in study on transnational family, that cross-cultural marriages and transnational unions are exposed to greater conflicts and family frictions. Often such type of families is opposed to the families formed in the local contexts. However, my research disproved such statements. When I started my research, I anticipated a significant amount of negative responses of living in the marriage with Finn, however, my fieldwork research revealed a more positive story.

I emphasize, that I considered Russian immigrant women in Finland as cosmopolitans. Moreover, as transnational actors, I refer them as individuals characterized by transnationalism “from below” which describes the transnational practices are performed by ordinary people and not by transnational elite.

The perspective of conflicts in the transnational marriage drove my idea of research at first. Mutual expectations were the central focus of research, which included the constructed gendered and cultural models of behaviour, which in their turn could contribute to the conflicts

in the transnational family. In this connection, I attempted to approach the topic from the three different perspectives – transnational, gender and historical. I believe these three dimensions allowed me to approach the topic of Finnish – Russian transnational family and mutual expectations from different angles. It helped me to reveal the challenges as well as positive experiences of formation of transnational family relations between spouses from the countries, which have contradictory perceptions about each other.

It is necessary to underline that the mutual expectations of foreign can be expressed in terms of gender behavioural patterns and culture. I believe these two mechanisms are intertwined and I suppose that the mechanism of gender is conditioned by culture. Thus, the mismatching of these gendered patterns of behaviour, conditioned by culture may cause the conflicts in cross border marriages. I also believe that it is impossible to separate the factor of culture from the gendered behavioural patterns as our identities are always formed in particular contexts and cultures. It is closely connected with the notion of “cultural scripts” mentioned in the thesis. As cultural scripts are involved in our everyday construction of selves and our identities, it directly influences our expectations in relations to other people. However, for Russian interlocutors, such factors as upbringing, family background, and personality of the individual were also important, in their opinion, these factors also have a great influence on the behaviour of their Finnish spouses. However, one interlocutor underlined that she did not have any expectation upon her arrival to Finland; in her opinion a person should not anticipate anything and just learn. Learn the culture, language, society, behaviours and so on. However, in my opinion our expectations may be characterized as subconscious. Every interlocutor underlined several cases of misunderstandings or unfulfilled expectations, what tells about their internal expectations, which are constructed unconsciously (and culturally).

In the continuation of the topic of mutual expectations, I asked my interlocutors if there is a need for a change in the foreign spouse. The majority of interlocutors responded it may lead only to the increase of conflicts and it is would be a wrong decision. Moreover the majority of women refers to the factor of personality and upbringing of the Finnish man and claims that there is no sense for a change.

In the research of gender order differences in Russia and Finland, I discovered more similarities between them, especially in Soviet and Post-Soviet background. The role of woman in both societies was defined according social and hard economic situation in both countries - mostly it was the role of worker, who combined the hard labour with the mothering practices. However, one moment is important here – if such role of women was accepted

publicly in Finland, in Russia (USSR) still, the public attached the role of mother to that. The gender order in Russia may be still seemed as patriarchal, even in contemporary conditions. I believe that the stereotypical images of gendered roles contribute to that, especially by means of the media. The West also is influenced by these images, which leads to the wrong perceptions of Russian women in the Western countries, in my case – Finland. Juntunen clearly expressed the idea of the variety of ways in which gender can be interpreted and enacted (Juntunen, 2002). He also underlines the fluid nature of gender in the conditions of multiple contexts and time periods (Juntunen, 2002). Thus it is worth emphasizing that gender generalizations would be inappropriate, moreover such perceptions may cause the conflict. Still, Russian women possess their cultural and gender attributes, my fieldwork revealed important areas of their expectations towards to Finnish men – these expectations mainly touched upon the practices of sharing, economic sphere (sponsorship, it was important for them a man could pay for them), the emotional side (they mostly anticipated signs of care, presents and mutual understandings) and behavioural patterns. However women also paid attention to the cultural differences, some of them claimed they had several conflicts on the ground of cultural views. In connection with that I describe the mechanism of negotiating cultures in the part “Culture as a “repertoire””, a term developed by Swidler (2001). This notion describes the condition an immigrant possesses a set of skills, which allow adaptation to the culture, to cope with it. Moreover, these ideas are closely connected with the notion of habitus, regarded in the thesis. The empirical data proves that it was not an easy task for Russian women to get used to the cultural traditions of Finland. Additionally, as interlocutors’ experience shows, Russian women residing in Finland try to maintain their own cultural identities and emotional attachment to Russian customs and styles of communication despite the aspirations of being similar to the members of the host society. To maintain this balance – the commitments to native customs and to accept and adapt to foreign culture is a challenging task, which sometimes may cause isolation and depression for immigrants.

Besides, the earlier migration studies always regarded the migration of female immigrants to the West as economically caused. Such phenomena may be characterized by the term of global hypergamy, developed by Constable (2005). Again, such perceptions led to the stereotypes and stigma of immigrant women, what created a wrong impression about them in the host societies. In the case of my Russian interlocutors, as they confessed, such cases also happened – women were treated as prostitutes or domestic workers not only by society, but particularly by their Finnish husbands, despite the fact that women had a higher socio economic status in Russia than their Finnish husbands in Finland. The motivations of Russian women for move to

Finland were varied. They were guided by different aims – some wanted to find a good father for a child, some met a spouse by accident, and some had an aim of obtaining Finnish citizenship. In the thesis I attempted to disprove the idea of cross border marriage driven by the aims of benefit and economic gain. About four marriages can be considered as motivated for benefits reasons, while two women came to Finland on the basis of Ingrian repatriate roots (one already has been married on Ingrian Finn and they lived in Russia, and another one, still unmarried), other three women did not define their aims precisely.

The historical outline of the relationships of both countries was inevitable decision in order to describe the important ideas of perceptions of both nationalities in terms of culture and emotional sphere. There was a need to focus on the analysis of the historical development of both countries and take a look at the most challenging moments of relationships in order to understand the attitudes of Finns to Russians. Besides, the migratory trends in this part allowed me to reflect on the politics of cooperation between two countries, already existing in the 20th century. The factor of common border contributed to the increase of migration from Russia, especially in 1990s which also caused the growth of cross border marriages.

It is possible to claim that the perceptions of Russian and Finns are predetermined by the history of Russian-Finnish relationships. Several wars and the status of Finland under the Russian domination for several years contributed to the “othering” of Russians. Some interlocutors confessed that sometimes they prefer not to speak in Russian in the presence of Finns. In the 1990s 47 per cent of Finns supported the idea of regaining the lost territories while 44 per cent of population regarded it as negative aspiration (Hämäläinen, 2001, online). Therefore, it is possible to observe that nowadays there is not a strong wish for the return of lost territories despite the claims of my interlocutors’ Finnish spouses regarding that. I connect it mostly with the wish of such spouses to make the wife feel vulnerable in connection with her Russian ethnicity.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that mostly middle-aged people retain such conservative attitudes towards Russian migrants, whilst the young generation’s attitude is more flexible. Despite the active development of border cooperation and in the sphere of migratory policies, Finland still keeps “distance” with Russia, although supporting the partnership in the spheres of economy, trade and cultural exchange. Despite it, interlocutors noted the lack of discriminatory attitudes and emphasized that Finland is a country, which has a strong social base and supports them very well. Furthermore, they underlined a positive attitude of Finns towards them.

To conclude, it is possible to say that the transnational marriage is complex and multi-aspect phenomena, which has many contradictory sides. With the hectic way of life of today, with on-going global processes, increased mobility and collaboration between states, we can observe the growth of the numbers of the international marriages and maintenance of transnational ties as consequence. The mutual expectations in transnational families, grounded on the basis of gender and cultural differences may cause conflicts, however we also have to take into consideration such factors as upbringing of the foreign spouse, his family background, social status and personal traits. One of the main problems of today stays unresolved – the stereotypical images of immigrant groups still challenge their life and adaptation in the host countries. In connection with that, once again, I would like to underline the stereotypical images of Russian female immigrants on the West. Margaret Mead claimed that such images of roles are not applicable to every case and it is would be wrong to generalize; she discovered that women can play different roles and be flexible in different societies. Moreover, as Miville (2013) claimed, the process of negotiation of gender roles involves the awareness about possible conflicting areas and the way other individuals construct their own meanings (in terms of messages, values and norms) (p. 237). Thus, it leads us to the necessity for the mutual understanding and respect and the wish for learning the culture of those whom you love. Without mutual efforts in understanding each other it is impossible to eradicate the conflicts in the transnational families.

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