IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND WORK

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON INTEGRATION OF WORKING
RUSSIAN WOMEN IN LAPPENRANTA–IMATRA AREA

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ABSTARCT

The purpose of this study is to describe the integration process of working Russian women in Lappeenranta-Imatra area. It aims at gaining insight into the integration process as the women see and experience it. The study attempts to describe the strategies immigrant women have used to attain and maintain place in the Finnish labour market and to highlight the strengths and opportunities immigrant women possess and deploy in this process.

Nine women were interviewed in semi-structured interviews. The interviews took place in May 1999. The approach used in this study is qualitative and the interviews form the base for the analysis.

The integration has in this study two dimensions: exercising duties and rights of citizenship in social, economic and political spheres of life and hence participating in those fields. This participation involves development of human, social and cultural capital of immigrants.

The result of the analysis suggests that the interviewed women participated in all fields of life. Social contacts are developed in two circles. First circle includes a Finn who acts as a mediator in the early stage of resettlement. The second circle expands during the time of resettlement and provides the women feeling of being socially accepted. These contacts facilitate the women to develop social capital. Results of this study confirm that participating in economic sphere plays an important role in a resettling context although structural integration has succeeded only partly. This study suggests that although the society does not utilise fully immigrants' human capital, the interviewed women have managed individually to develop the human capital to their advantage. Cultural capital of the women is undergoing changes although they seek to transfer the Russian culture to their children. Interpreting research findings from the acculturation perspective it can be argued that the adaptation process resembles in general that of integration and in the working life of the interviewed Russian women the process has an inclination towards assimilation.

Keywords: immigrants, Finland, Russia, women, integration, participation, citizenship

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Finland was until late 1980's a country of emigration. The situation has since changed and today Finland has a role of an immigrant and refugee receiving country. According to the statistics by the Ministry of Labour the number of people born outside Finland and non-Finnish citizens is about 85.000, and about 16.000 of these have come to the country as refugees (migration magazine MoniTori, 1/1999). The number of persons settling in Finland in context of immigration, return migration and humanitarian immigration is in steady increase every year. Internationally speaking the numbers are still modest and Finland is culturally one of the most homogeneous countries in the world. People with a non-Finnish background have, however, become a permanent feature in Finnish society.

In the integration process of immigrants into Finnish society there are two factors that are commonly considered of paramount importance: knowledge of Finnish (or Swedish) language skills and employment.

The Finnish language skills are taught in a universal and systematic manner and at least the basic skills of Finnish language are within reach of all immigrants. Finding employment is a greater challenge. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Labour, the unemployment rate in January 1999 for immigrants was 64,7 %; while the respective figure in the whole Finland was 13 % (MoniTori 1/1999). The employment situation for immigrant women is even gloomier; the women's unemployment rates are generally higher than immigrant men's (ibid).

Russian presence in Finland, and in Eastern Finland particularly, has a long tradition. The longest traditions stretch to the early 18th century when serfs were transferred to Eastern Finland for military purposes and were organised in the Russian Government of Vyborg (Horn, 183). Russian presence has since then fluctuated in Eastern Finland but has always been there all the same. Presently, the number of Russian immigrants in Finland (over 16.000) qualifies them to be the biggest single group of immigrants in Finland (MoniTori 1/1999). The majority of the Russian immigrants are women.

Immigration research in Finland indicates that successful integration, i.e. full participation in the economic, social and political life of the Finnish society, has been realised only in a case of a few refugees and immigrants (Ekholm 1994, Valtonen 1999). Full participation constitutes of indicators and markers of so-called positive adaptation or integration (Valtonen 1997, 17) such as employment, educational achievement, social relations, positive outlook on the future etc. Shortage of these markers has serious repercussions for the resettling individual and the receiving society alike. Out of those indicators employment is not only an economically important factor in integration into the host country, but it is also considered (Valtonen 1997 and 1999 and Liebkind 1993) a high stress factor since the work provides immigrants the main source of contacts with the host society. Without employment the immigrants run the risk of being confined solely to the circle of their own countrymen and of being uninvolved with the wider society. Liebkind (1993) has also argued that the lack of cultural communities is a detrimental factor affecting the psychological well-being of immigrants in Finland. Unemployment of the immigrants has also increased Finn's negative attitude towards foreigners and has increased both xenophobia and racism (Wahlbeck 1997, Jaakkola 1999). Recent study by Jaakkola (1999) reveals that the attitude towards foreigners toughened during the economic recession late 1980's and early 1990's but have started improving at the same time as the economic situation started improving. With a few exceptions; attitudes towards Russians have deteriorated seriously since 1987 and have not improved since (Jaakkola 1999, 94). Jaakkola concludes that reasons for this negative attitude might be traced to the mass media and

single cases of criminal behaviour and prostitution, which have been generalised in the minds of the public.

In my research I have attempted to have a closer look at the integration process of immigrant women who have working history. My interest was to find the strategies that immigrant women have developed and implied to gain access to and to retain place in the Finnish labour market. I have also been interested in the role of formal and informal networking and relationships that have affected this process. Based on the previous research and my own experience, I assume that issues such as ethnic relations, ethnic identity and cultural retention have the greatest relevance to integration (Valtonen 1997, Liebkind 1996, Berry et al. 1992).

I have focused on how the integration takes place 'on the ground'. This study tries to understand and describe the immigrant women's own perspective on the issue of integration in form of societal and economic participation. Consequently this study uses field research methods, which allow the immigrant women's own point of view to be heard.

My interest towards integration issues intensified when moving back to Finland after decades of absence. Several moves from one country to another had sensitised me towards the issues of integration and minorities. When returning to Finland, high normative value Finnish society attaches to work, became perceptible to me. Frequently, if not always, the discussion, with strangers and friends alike, began with a question, where do you work? I became curious to study the repercussions of employment to one's integration process.

My interest in Russians as a minority has concrete and practical reasons. Having spent my early childhood only a few kilometres away from then Soviet Union left me curious about the 'Soviet Citizens' occasionally visiting my hometown. Returning to the area after the collapse of Soviet Union increased my curiosity. Russia was more present, but now as an economic resource and labour force. What seemed to remain the same was the suspicion

3

Finns expressed towards Russia and Russians. This suspicion was culminated in lively

discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of Russian versus Finnish women as

wives in the local newspaper's 'Letters to the Editor' columns for months and months.

How do these women see their adaptation process themselves? What are their obstacles and

strategies overcoming them?

These ideas in mind I started interviewing working Russian immigrant women in

Lappeenranta-Imatra area in April 1999. I am grateful for those women who agreed to be

interviewed for this study.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Theoretical framework

The purpose of this study is to explore the integration process of Russian women who are involved in a wage-work sphere of the Finnish society. I have chosen an actor-centred perspective. By this I mean that I look at the issue from the vantage point of an actor, immigrant and consider integration to be attainment of a degree and quality of societal participation that is satisfactory to this actor. With this actor-centred approach, I am interested in knowing how the interviewed women describe their life in Finland in general and their work in particular. I have also included the scope of goals and priorities and measure it against the present situation to see how these women describe their own life-quality. In addition to language skills, participation requires some social and vocational skills. In order to develop these skills (or resources) I am exploring the concept of capital by Bourdieu (1998, 8).

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory about the role of cultural systems of distinction in social practices analyses post-industrial society in a present day within the framework of a cultural class theory. He uses definitions such as capital, habitus and fields. Bourdieu's theory seeks distance from Marxist class theories by stating that people are not organised in classes deduced from their position in a production-line but rather according to the possession of different 'capitals' or resources (Alasuutari 1996, 34). Bourdieu further argues that people possess certain amounts of different capital: economic, cultural and social capital. Individuals or agents as Bourdieu prefers to call people, accumulate these capitals in different fields of the society and exchange them at values agreed by those operating in

5

the respective fields. According to Bourdieu's theory people are in constant, symbolic battle in different fields of the society. In this battle, cultural capital can be exchanged according to the rules set and applied by those operating in that field into economic capital and social status. Bourdieu states that cultural capital is accumulated along agent's lifetime, during formal education, upbringing process and consumption of cultural products while economic capital refers to income and property.

Bourdieu's theory has attracted several social scientists to interpret his works. JP Roos in his introduction text to Boudieu's book sees capitals as qualities possessed by people (Roos 1985, 12). Economic capital refers to property, income and positions: cultural capital means degrees and credentials, knowledge and acquired professional respect: social capital refers to number and type of social contacts an individual has, how well does an agent know the appropriate behaviour in different social situations etc. Typical for these capitals is that their values fluctuate according to the rules set for that particular field.

Immigrants, when resettling in a new country,are in a situation, where they have acquired some skills and knowledge or some capital prior to her arrival. They have some education, even a profession, and experience. Valtonen has in her studies of immigrants and refugees used the concept of capitals in an expanded way (1997, 1999) suitable for migration context. In addition to Bourdieu's economic and cultural capital, Valtonen uses the concept of human capital, drawn from the economic research. In Valtonen's research human capital forms immigrant's base for a capacity building to participate in the economic, social and political fields of a society of resettlement. Employment experience and educational qualifications as well as language skills and other merits constitute parts of human capital.

Social capital is a citizen's capacity to deploy and utilise the acquired human capital to their advantage. This can be called a skill of orienteering in the societal structure and network of contacts, formal and informal, and social contacts.

Cultural capital means aspects of new acquired culture, which help in coping and problem solving. It also includes aspects related to values and life quality.

Immigrant's settlement process expands beyond the individual and involves also the state and its formal institutions. Concept of citizenship has merged to replace the earlier used concept of naturalisation (see also p. 31). Marshall's theory about citizenship offers understanding to the situation of the immigrant women in relation to the Finnish society and its formal institutions. According to Marshall's theory of citizenship, including both rights and duties, can be divided into three parts, or elements; namely civil, political and social elements (Marshall 1963:73-74). The civil element is composed of rights that are necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice (institutions most directly associated with this element are courts of justice).

Political element, according to Marshall, constitutes of the right to participate in and exercise political power (e.g. in parliament and councils of local government), and also the right to vote.

Social element means the whole range of rights; from the right to a degree of economic welfare and security, to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society (educational system and social service).

Citizenship compasses rights as well as duties. The way Marshall has organised the elements they cover most functions of a present day post-industrial society. Reference is usually made to the rights of the citizens although citizens have certain duties also, e.g. duty to pay taxes. These duties are located both in the public and private lives of the citizens. Valtonen in her immigrant studies (1997, 1999) talks about changes in the field of responsibility which the immigrant's encounter while moving from one country to another.

7

Research of immigrant groups in Finland, particularly the people from collective cultures, indicates that immigrants face fundamental changes of duties in the three fields of citizenship (Ekholm 1994, Valtonen 1997 and 1999).

When immigrants arrive in a new country of settlement they carry along, in Bourdieu's terms, a certain amount and type of capital and has access to very limited number of fields in the new society of resettlement. Their amount of economic capital might be totally distorted in a new country; they have left behind places of work, steady income and professional respect. Their cultural capital might be equally diminished, courses and degrees are not respected, and the credentials are not accepted or are at least questioned. Social capital, well-established network, both formal and informal, is of no use and familiar manners and traditions are considered peculiar in the new society of the resettlement. All citizens of a society, both 'old' and 'new' aspire better life, brighter future and improvement of the quality of life. In order to integrate into this society, the human, social and cultural capitals need to be renewed and re-worked.

My interest lies in exploring how Russian women have gained access to the fields of Finnish society, how they describe their integration, what kind of strategies they have used, how they describe the changes that their capitals have undergone.

2.2 Previous research

Migration research done in Finland has traditionally been focussing on the general migration pattern; the focus has been on the Finnish emigrants in their new places of migration rather than the migration situation in Finland. When the migration flow changed in the 1980s the focus also started changing and the questions of the immigrants living in Finland, the Finnish minorities, have become the main themes of research. The immigrants, however, are the objects of the research, not the subject(s). The research has mainly concentrated on refugees and other, voluntary migrant groups, have got less attention.

8

The latest migration research concentrated on Finnish people's *attitudes on immigrants* and refugees (Jaakkola 1989, 1995 and 1999). According to the research the attitudes are hardening and the tolerance level lowering. Some of these changes are explained through the hard economic times, severe unemployment situation and structural changes the society is undergoing.

Issues related to *work* and immigration has mainly been documented by the governmental organisations; the Ministry of Labour publishes regular statistics relating to the employment and unemployment situation of immigrants. Magdalena Jaakkola conducted a baseline study on *foreigners and work* in 1992. The research results reflect a time when overall employment situation was favourable in Finland and prosperity also reflected the situation of foreigners and their earnings. The study has a focus on structural integration into the labour markets and looks into issues such as salaries, positions and mobility. One of the principle findings of her study was that foreign men earn more than Finnish men do. There were, however, great differences among the nationalities. Generally the immigrants from English speaking countries and Western Europe are those earning higher salaries than Finns, while immigrants from outside Europe and Eastern Europe are clearly below the level of Finnish average. According to Jaakkola's study the unemployment rates are higher for immigrants and women's unemployment rates are higher than men's. Jaakkola also reveals gender fragmentation that resembles that of the Finns, men are more likely to be upper white-collar or blue-collar, and women lower white-collar. In average women even immigrant women earn less than men do. Jaakkola concludes that the ethnic hierarchy of occupations and income prevail among foreigners in Finland. The situation is not quite that deadlocked, as the dual labour market theory would have us believe.

Research in the 90s

Integration issues have lately received increasing attention from the Finnish research community. Two recent studies are pointing an accusing finger at the Finnish resettling

agencies' role in the integration of the immigrants and refugees. Valtonen in her research on

societal participation of refugees and immigrants (1997) argues that in Finland the settlement

services feature very little plurality and are highly centralised into the local authority

network with the resettling individual in the 'role of compliance with pre-orchestrated

programs'. Valtonen concluded that the integration process seems to underpin in four

parameters; emancipation, parity, interdependence and integrity. Wahlbeck studied Kurdish

refugees (1997) and concluded that Finnish resettling authorities are implementing dispersal

policy, which does not promote integration into the host society. He suggested that

refugees' and immigrants' own diasporic networking can be a useful resource in their efforts

to improve the situation in their new country of settlement. These networks can naturally

never replace egalitarian welfare states and their structures, says Wahlbeck, but in the

situation where integration does not work in an optimal way (high unemployment rates),

there is also a need to look at the internal resources of the refugee and immigrant

communities themselves.

Elina Ekholm conducted a baseline study in 1993-1994 on refugees' living conditions and

integration into the Finnish society. The study provided statistics for a longitudinal study

concerning ethnic equality. Ekholm divides integration into structural integration and

internal integration within the ethnic community. She concludes that very few refugees have

managed to integrate successfully into the Finnish society and the main obstacle is

unemployment.

Valtonen's follow-up study (1999) concentrated on refugees' present integration strategies

and compared the situation with the previous research. To a certain extend, Valtonen's

research findings are applicable to other immigrating groups as well, the challenges

integration offers are very much the same regardless the background of the immigrating

group. One of Valtonen's main findings was that although the refugees are equal with the

Finns in the social security system, the situation is different in the field of employment. She

considers employment the greatest challenge of all integration parameters. The employment

situation of the refugees had not improved at all although the overall improvement of economic situation in the country was obvious and the employment situation of Finns improved considerably. She also found out that the employment situation of the highly educated refugees is more troublesome than the less educated ones.

Karmela Liebkind has approached integration from a social-psychological angle. Her study (with Inga Jassinskaja-Lahti, 1997) on adaptation of immigrants in Helsinki area included seven ethnic groups, including Russian, and concentrated on psychological well being of immigrants. They concluded that acculturative stress is correlating highly to the experiences of racism while factors such as high degree of ethnic identity and adherence to traditional values, are contributing towards successful adaptation.

Immigrants from the former Soviet Union were included in Paula Hirstiö-Snellman's research on integration and coping strategies and the successfulness of reaching their goals. According to her study the immigrants from the former Soviet Union succeeded better than immigrants from Islamic countries in pursuing and reaching their immediate goals during the early phase of resettlement. She concludes that their capabilities will diminish significantly when the intensive institutional support will end and they will in the long run not succeed in finding their place in the job market and society at large (Hirstiö-Snellman, 1994).

Quite a different angle to immigrants' employment issues was taken up by Seppo Paananen. He takes a closer look into the gatekeepers of the labour market and has researched recruitment officials dealing with immigrants' labour issues. His main finding is that for these key persons, gatekeepers, the place of emigration influences the decision of recruitment. Those coming from the third world and former socialist countries have the toughest attitudes to confront when applying for work. The recruitment staff assesses the immigrant applicants as if through the concept of 'Finnishness', the gatekeepers value the knowledge of the Finnish language even if it has no direct contact with the job description.

For these gatekeepers the knowledge of the Finnish language means that the immigrant job seekers are serious and want seriously to commit both to work and Finnish society. Paananen also concludes that there is a particularly persistent discrimination going on at the Finnish labour market and the values attached to language and nationality are holding tight. Therefore, he concludes, labour market might not be a suitable arena for integration but solutions have to be found elsewhere.

2.2.1 Significance of this study

Immigrant women in Finland have not been much researched. Women who have come to Finland as a result of marriage are the third largest group of immigrants after returnees and refugees (Maahanmuuttajanaiset Suomessa, 5). In 1996, there were some 12,000 mixed marriages and every year some 2,000 such marriages are registered (ibid 5). According to the report of the Ministry of Labour, *Immigrant women in Finland*, these women are prone to marginalisation due to the lack of social networks. Dependence on the support of their husbands might worsen their situation (ibid 3-4). Immigrant women can therefore be in a position where they are prone to double marginalisation, by being women and by being immigrants.

I hope to bring to light issues of how working Russian women in Lappeenranta-Imatra area describe their working lives in Finland, what they consider to be the essential issues in resettling context, what strategies they have used to enter the labour markets, how and when they have utilised institutional support. I also attempt to bring to focus what kind of societal, human capital they have developed in overcoming initial disadvantages in the process of settlement, adaptation and integration. I attempt to show what is involved in the immigration experience from the viewpoint of an immigrant herself. I have chosen this subjective vantage point to give voice to those who are not so often heard. By choosing women with working history I have chosen 'success stories' in the migration context, where employment is commonly considered the greatest hurdle of integration in the society.

2.2.2 The aim of the study

The study aims to look closely into the integration process of working immigrant women and seeks to find answers to the following questions:

What types of processes are involved as immigrant women attain and maintain a place in the Finnish labour market? What types of individual strategies are needed? What types of relationships, formal and informal, are developed during the stay? Are immigrant women able to participate as they would like and at which level are they capable of doing so? What obstacles (cultural and other) have developed during settlement? The aim of this study is to highlight the strengths and opportunities immigrant women possess and deploy upon entering the Finnish labour market and staying there.

2.2.3 Limitations

This study aims to take a look at the integration process from a vantage point of an immigrant woman. In modern integration research, integration involves both the individual and the ethnic group and the receiving society. Integration cannot be explained only by the capabilities, resources or capital, of the immigrant herself but also by the openness of the institutions of the receiving society. I am looking at the institutional side of the immigration from the vantage point of the resettling person. My intention is to see how the women perceive the role of these institutions in their integration process; hence the institutions are included into this study as structural elements conditioning the individual's action strategies.

Immigrant, for the purpose of this study I consider 'a person who moves permanently to a new country for the purpose of earning a livelihood there' (Liebkind, 1994, 9). Immigrant refers to a first generation immigrant whose move from the former Soviet Union or Russia has been voluntary, that means they have been able to influence the decision of moving to Finland, and the time and place of it. I have excluded the Ingrains from the study to limit

the group. Furthermore, Ingrains have in Finland a particular immigrant status that would have required discrete scrutiny.

This study deals solely with immigrant women. Therefore, I am referring throughout the texts to the immigrant as a 'she'.

2.3 Russian immigration to Eastern Finland; Lappeenranta and Imatra

Russia has been an essential element of the social geography of Lappeenranta-Imatra area ever since early 18th century. The political relations of these two countries have determined emigration from Russia to Finland. Russian emigrants, settled mainly for business reasons, had settled mostly in the area of Vyborg although Lappeenranta area providing good trading opportunities for tar also had a substantial number of Russians residents. Similarly the Russian army personnel settled more or less permanently in the area (Räikkönen 1999, 81-84). After the end of Second World War in 1945 the border was closed and migration diminished. Traffic across the border started again in the 1960s and Soviet tourists were commonly seen in Lappeenranta and Imatra area. Occasional immigrants moved to Finland through the marriage. When the Soviet Union dismantled at the end of 1980s the situation changed completely; immigration, tourism and trade intensified (Räikkönen 84). After the political decision on accepting Ingrains as returnees to Finland, the impact of migrants from Russia was felt even more intensely all over Finland, also in Lappeenranta and Imatra areas. At the moment Russians form the biggest single group, appox. 40 %, of the total immigrant population (Kyntäjä, 9).

Russians in Finland form a biggest single group of immigrants. The total number of Russian immigrants in the country in 1998 was 31,389 (MoniTori 1, 1999); the Russian-speaking minority is the third most common native language in Finland after Finnish and Swedish (Jaakkola 1999, 83).

14

In Imatra and Lappeenranta area the number of immigrants is quite small in relation to the total population. Lappeenranta has appox. 55.000 inhabitants and foreigners consist approx. 2 % of the population and in Imatra out of total appox. 35.000, about 1%.

Area	Immigrant women	Immigrant men	Total
Lappeenranta	681 (56%)	542 (44%)	1,223
Imatra	211 (62%)	125 (37%)	336

Number of Russian immigrants (by nationality) at the end of 1998 by gender:

Area	Russian women	Russian men	Total
Lappeenranta	432 (62%)	261 (38%)	693 (100%)
Imatra	155 (69%)	68 (31%)	223 (100%)

Russian women form 63 % of the total immigrant women in Lappeenranta and in Imatra the number is even higher with 73%; while the respective figures for Russian men are 48 % in Lappeenranta and 54 % in Imatra. (Statistics from Lappeenranta Magistrate telephone discussion on 21 Jan. 2000 with Jaana Mikkonen.) In comparison to the situation in the whole of Finland, the presence of Russian immigrants in Lappeenranta and Imatra area is more visible than in the rest of the country where the number of Russian immigrants of total immigrant population is approx. 30% (Kyntäjä, Kulu, 16).

Attitudes towards the Russians are overall negative in Finland. Jaakkola found in her study (1999, 17) that attitudes towards Russians, Arabs and Somalis are the most negative among immigrant groups. The overall negative attitude against foreigners had improved a bit in general but not with those three groups (ibid 83). Similar research findings can be found by Pirjo Jukarainen (2000). She compared schoolchildren's attitudes towards their neighbours across the Eastern and Western borders of Finland. In her study, school children in Lappeenranta were found to have the most negative attitude towards their neighbours in Russia. Pitkänen and Kouki found out that the Finnish authorities consider Russians to be one of the most unwanted immigrants by expressing very little trust towards Russians as immigrants to Finland (1999, 82).

3 METHODS AND EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Qualitative versus quantitative

Discussion about the qualitative and quantitative research methods as alternative strategies

is a prevailing issue in migration research. Both strategies are used in contemporary research

dealing with migration issues. Qualitative and quantitative research methods can be

contrasted on several dimensions in order to identify the basic differences (e.g. Creswell,

Alasuutari, Grönfors).

On the ontological issue of *what is real,* or the question of truth, quantitative researchers see

reality as 'objective'. Thus, questionnaires and/or experiments are used to measure this

objective truth. The qualitative researcher is not in pursuit of 'truth' but 'reality'. This

reality is constructed by the individuals who are involved in the research situation, both the

researcher and the research objects. The realities cannot be checked against other sources

(e.g. statistics), but the reality exists in any given situation. The qualitative researchers use

interviews and participant observations as instruments to obtain reality. The starting point

in the qualitative research is the description of real life (Hirsjärvi&Remes&Sajavaara 1999,

161). The idea of reality is multi-dimensional. Qualitative researchers cannot shed values

from their shoulders because the values influence what and how we understand the

phenomena we research upon. It is not possible to obtain objectivity in qualitative research

in a traditional manner, because what researchers know and how they know are intertwined

aspects of cognition. We can only find out some conditioned explanations under certain

circumstances in a given time and place. It has been commonly stated (ibid 161) that in the qualitative research the aim is to find or reveal facts rather than verify existing truths.

On the epistemological question, or the *relationship of the researcher to that being researched*, the quantitative strategy requires that the researcher is remote and independent in relation to those being researched. It is also a prerequisite to be able to select a systematic sample and be objective in controlling the bias. In the qualitative research, on the other hand, the researcher interacts with those under study, observing and participating and cooperating with informants, often over a long period of time. The researcher seeks to minimise the distance between her and those being researched.

The axiological issue concerns the *role of values* in the study. Quantitative researchers keep their own values out of the study. Values are not included in the reports, only facts are reported and the arguments are based on the facts given. The qualitative researcher, on the other hand, recognises the values in the research process, from the data gathering to the report writing. The researcher also presents these values in the reports.

3.1.2 The logic and potential of qualitative method in this research

One of the characteristics for qualitative research according to Alasuutari (1996) is that research material needs to make it possible to interpret it from many angles. Material needs to be rich in expressions and complexity. Material has as many dimensions as life itself. The research material is descriptions, or documents of what has happened. Theoretical framework determines what kind of material needs to be collected and what method to be used in analysis. It is characteristic to collect material that makes many interpretations possible.

Inductive logic is typical for the qualitative paradigm. In this logic analysis, categories, themes and patterns emerge from the data. Rather than being identified beforehand by the researcher, categories emerge from informants, interviews, field notes, and documents.

This emergence provides rich 'context-bound' information that can yield patterns, or theories that help explain phenomena (Creswell 1994:7). Characteristic of inductive logic is the building of abstractions, concepts, hypotheses and theories from details.

Qualitative research is particularly suited to the understanding of the meaning of events, situations and actions in which participants are involved: and of the accounts, which they give of their lives and experiences. Meaning is understood to include cognition, affect, intentions and other aspects that make up the 'participants' perspective'. Hence, participants' perspective on events and actions is, at the same time, their account of these events and actions which are reviewable in terms of 'truth or false', and also part of the reality which the researcher seeks to understand.

In qualitative research it is usual that a relatively small number of situations or individuals are studied. Thus, the individuality of each of these is preserved in analyses, as opposed to data collection and aggregation from large samples across individuals or situations. The method is suitable for understanding the particular context within which the participants act; and the influence of this context upon their actions. It will be possible to explore how participation phenomena – events, actions, meanings and patterns are shaped by the unique circumstances of this context upon their actions.

In qualitative research it is important to connect the phenomena into a wider context. This is because a reply in qualitative research to a question WHY? is interesting only if it can be used as an analysis and interpretation model for other social phenomena in another context (Alasuutari 1997, 202) if changing the variables.

The main focus in my research is how the Russian women, who have already gained access to the Finnish labour market, see and describe their integration process. I am interested in a subjective account of the process, from the vantage point of the immigrant herself. The

aim of the study is to analyse and better understand the process of integration/adaptation of these women into the Finnish society.

3.1.3   Ethnographic base

Ethnography has been developed from curiosity about human beings, about every-day life as well as festivities.   In ethnographic research all parties, also the researcher, have an active, even moulding role in the research.   The researcher attempts to understand the meanings of events from the vantage point of the research subjects.   Ethnography is both the process and the product: through research we do not try to reveal the 'final truths' but construct the interpretations where the researcher combines the theoretical knowledge, her own viewpoint and that of the research subjects.

In this study philosophical point and base for orientation lies in the symbolic interactionism which focuses on how we attach symbolic meanings to interpersonal relations (Silverman 1984, 1).   Central idea in symbolic interaction is to take into consideration how the research subjects interpret situations, because these interpretations direct their behaviour. Herbert Blumer (in Ekholm 1994) has further developed symbolic interactionisim and emphasises the role of culture in moulding people's behaviour. Blumer argues that people's different interpretations are created in social interactions, either among the people or within the person himself. These interpretations help people to make decisions and these decisions lead towards creativeness in human behaviour. Interactionism is concerned with the creation and change of symbolic orders via social interaction.   Interactionists are likely to find themselves in a subject-to-subject relation to their data (ibid 47).   According to interactionism, interviewees are viewed as experiencing subjects who actively construct their social world; the primary issue is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences; the main ways to achieve this are unstructured, open-ended interviews usually and in-depth participant observation (Silverman 1984 91).   In this humanistic version of the interview both the type of knowledge gained and the validity of the analysis are based on deep understanding of issues.   This is because the humanistic framework

supports meaningful understanding of the person and wholeness in human inquiry

(Silverman 1984, 95).

3.2   Method

There are several research traditions which have developed within the areas of

anthropology and sociology that are related to the perspectives as outlined above. I have

chosen ethnographic field research methods because they allow the researcher to study

social phenomena in their own natural settings and to understand social actor's points of

view.

3.2.1   Semi-structured interviews

Methods are techniques, which take on a specific meaning according to the methodology in

which they are used (Silverman 1984, 9).   In a case study research, Silverman argues, quality

of analysis is more important than recruitment of data the format of the interview.

Selection of methods is influenced by such factors as (Hirsjärvi &Hurme 1982, 27)

effectiveness, economy, accuracy, reliability etc. Semi-structured interviews are unique; the

researcher can obtain information simultaneously in two ways: by leading the interviewee to

introspection and observing interviewees words and actions at the same time (ibid 28).

They also state that semi-structured interviews suit well in emotional and intimate topics

and might prove to be more effective in material collection since it is more difficult to say

no to a person requesting an interview than to leave a letter with a survey unanswered.

Semi-structured interviews also offer the possibility to obtain descriptive examples and deep

information (ibid 52). I have chosen the semi-structured interviews as my method to gain

deeper knowledge about the complex process of integration/adaptation.

3.2.2   Data collection strategy

I interviewed 11 Russian women residing in Lappeenranta Imatra area and interviews were

conducted in a semi-structured format which is enclosed as an appendix.   Each interview

lasted from 1,5 hours to 3 hours. My initial plan of using snowball technigue (to start

evolving from the first interviewee) did not succeed. I did not manage to get any contacts

of any possible interviewees from there. It proved equally difficult to approach women

directly in their working places in shops and restaurants and I had to discard that idea as

well. Finally my strategy of finding interviewees involved using a few Finns who had

developed contacts, either professional or personal, with Russian women in the area. This

helped me to start with a few Russian women and further contacts were developed from

there. I telephoned the women first in order to establish their willingness to an interview.

All the women wanted to know the topic of the research in advance. One interviewee

accepted the request on the phone but called some days later to cancel the appointment.

One of the interviews was written down, all the others were tape-recorded and later

transcripted.

Two of the interviewees were rejected before the analysis began. In one of the interviews

the husband came in as an interpreter and participated so actively in the interview that it

became evident during the transcription process that all the answers recorded were

husband's not the wife's. The last interview was also rejected, because it became clear only

towards the end of the interview that the person concerned was not employed.

The interviews took place mainly at the homes of interviewees. They took place in a

pleasant atmosphere and always ended up in drinking tea and eating Russian chocolate or

pastries. All except one of the interviewees were previously unknown to me. Interviews

were conducted in May-June 1999. Interviews were done in Finnish and in one case in

English. I later transcripted interviews and coded them manually. Those interviews I have

used in this report as examples, I have translated into English.

3.2.3 Frame of the interview

Many researchers point to the fact that qualitative researchers are guests in the private

spaces of the world and therefore behave accordingly. It is mentioned that researchers'

manners should be good and their code of ethic strict. My intention was to get these women to tell their story by posing them some open-ended questions to gather authentic information of their experiences of integration into Finnish society. Values attached to work in Finnish society are positive and I also found that immigrant women were open and happy to talk about their work experiences. My topics of interview were relatively 'safe', issues of political sensitivity or of deep personal history were not touched. I was, however, aware that I moved in the private spheres of people's lives. My principle was to observe any limits that the women imposed on any of the topics. I noticed issues relating to previous family history, such as marriage or divorce, were sensitive and were discussed very briefly if at all.

3.2.4 Ethical questions

Acquiring information. The feminist perspective sees ideal interview situations as balanced subject-subject situations, not on the power relation that makes the interview subject an object. It has been argued (Ronkainen 1989) that it is easier to achieve this while a woman interviews a woman as was the case in all my interviewees. On the other hand the situation might change during the interview from one frame to another (ibid 70-71). While conducting the interview at home of the subject it has a friendly connotation of a friend visiting a friend.

The epistemological assumption of the qualitative research is that the distance between the researcher and the research is reduced in the interest of generating insight and explanation. The role that the researcher acquires also has significance. I assumed that telling the interviewees about my own migration experience would reduce the distance and put us in a more equal position., as would have otherwise been the case, the interviewees being 'them' (a minority representative) and I being 'the other' (a majority representative). Therefore, I introduced the topic of the interview to the women by telling them that I had only recently returned to Finland after 20 years' absence. By this I also hoped to create confidentiality in

the situation by telling them about my own background and my family circumstances, thus creating room for active interaction between us.

Confidentiality and anonymity. I have respected the two basic principles in the ethics of research; confidentiality and anonymity, which I had also promised to all interviewee during the initial contact. During these interviews I also tried to show respect to my interviewees by avoiding issues they did not want to elaborate.

3.2.5   Additional sources of information

Seven interviews took places in the homes of the interviewees, one woman's home I had visited in another context. This gave me an opportunity to observe the women in their home settings, and observe their homes. During these interviews I also met the other members of the family.

In addition to the interviews, I have gathered information from other sources. I have found official statistical material to be useful. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in Finland provided valuable sources of background information as did the local newspaper 'Etelä-Saimaa' with numerous articles published during the time of material collection and analysis.

3.3   Empirical material – overview of characteristics

My aim was to interview working Russian women in Lappeenranta-Imatra area. The total of elevn women were interviewed; two interviews were discarded at the beginning of the analysis. One of the interviewees is married to a Russian man, who is also residing in Finland; one was undergoing the process of divorce from her Russian husband, also residing in Finland. One was a widower of a Finnish husband; four are married to, and two are divorced from Finnish husbands. Although the sample is fairly representative to the known variables relating to the whole population (age, educational background, marital

status), it still cannot be statistically representative of the Russian community in Finland.
This question, on the other hand, is not even relative, since this study does not use any
statistical methods in order to make statements about any wider community, but tries to
study the process of integration/adaptation of Russian working women into Finnish society
as they see and experience it.

	Age	No of years in Finland	Educational background	Employment in Russia	First employment in Finland	Employment now	Remarks
Lydia	32	10	University	Interpreter	Interpreter	Entrepreneur/ teacher	full-time
Olga	60	10	University	Speech- therapist	Teacher	Teacher	part-time
Maria	44	20	University	N/a	Teacher	Teacher	full-time
Vera	34	8	University	Engineer	Interpreter	Clerk	full-time
Jekaterina	52	9	University	Guide	Teacher	Entrepreneur	full-time
Alla	45	3	University	Lecturer	Lecturer/part time	Lecturer/part time	part/-tim
Anastasia	36	3	University	Researcher	Sales clerk	Sales clerk	full-time
Valentina	26	7	Primary	n/a	Cashier	Waitress	full-time
Galina	26	11	Primary	n/a	Clerk	Clerk/sales promoter	full-time

In this table, I have placed the women in order of interview and I also refer to them with
the same pseudonyms in the text of analysis.

4 CONCEPTUALISING INCLUSION

There are number of theories and concepts that describe the inclusion and exclusion of

migrants. The processes and discourses making a difference between 'us' and 'them' are

common in all societies, but take very different forms depending on the social

circumstances of a resettling society. Nevertheless, a common feature for all these is that

by defining 'them' we define who 'we' are ourselves. A number of different concepts,

including adaptation, assimilation, accommodation, acculturation and integration, are used

in the migration research to describe the process of including the immigrants and refugees

into the new society of settlement. The term adaptation is mostly used to describe

processes at a personal level. Since my study deals with the adaptation/integration process

of individuals I briefly define the concepts related to it. I start by looking at two central

concepts in a historical overview.

4.1 Definitions in historical overview – from assimilation ...

Assimilation is a widely used term in migration context. It can be defined as 'the process in

which a minority group adopts the values and patterns of behaviour of a majority group or

host culture, ultimately becomes absorbed by the majority group' (Webster's Dictionary of

Social Science, 1985). Assimilation is a term that has been commonly linked to the

American society, a melting pot -discussion in the beginning of the century when it was

argued that all immigrants would assimilate into each other, in order to become American.

A representative of an American Chicago school within sociology, Robert E. Park, is a

leading assimilationist theorist. In his theory a model called 'race relations cycle' was

developed. He created a theory about race relation circle in 1920s and included the concept of accommodation into it. Park states that a contact between two groups is followed by four phases: conflict, competition, and accommodation assimilation. Assimilation is the final outcome of this cycle. Hence, assimilation means inclusion of individuals into the society at large. The society does not, however, include diverse cultures or separate ethnic groups in the way a multi-cultural society does, and is considered one-dimensional.

Assimilation concept prevailed for decades in American migration research. Park's theory prevailed until 1960s when new research brought new dimensions into migration research. Milton Gordon proved that assimilation is not a straight process concerning changes of values and behaviour, but rather the heart of the matter is what position (in the social institutions) the immigrant attains in the country of resettlement. He drew a distinction between two levels of acculturation – adoption of 'extrinsic' cultural traits, e.g. manner of dress and speech, and subsequent adoption of 'intrinsic' cultural traits such as religion and ethnical values. Gordon further divided assimilation into seven types: cultural, structural, marriage, identification, attitudes, behaviour and societal values. Gordon considered structural and cultural assimilation to be the most important ones. If an immigrant attains those, the rest will follow (Ekholm 1994, 11).

4.2 ... to integration

Integration can be defined 'the bringing together, or incorporation, of parts into a whole' by a common dictionary definition (Webster's 1992).

In migration and ethnicity research it is difficult to find definition for integration because it is a multi-faceted phenomenon with traces in many disciplines; it is both multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. Integration theories and paradigms are at fluid stage of development in the modern context. In the integration process there is, however, always two parties

involved, *an entity*, which is the receiving or the resettling country and *a part*, an immigrant and her ethnic group.

Rainer Bauböck's view on integration has been widely used by the European Council in several official contexts. He sees integration as a structural process. His interpretation of integration has two modes. In the first mode the integration refers to the internal cohesion of an aggregate (Bauböck 1995, 6). The second interpretation refers to external parts joining a system. According to Bauböck, integration can be seen from the angle of immigrants joining in a new country or from the angle of the society receiving the new members. He also brings in the concept of citizenship into the definition. Bauböck sees integration as a process where settling and continuous residence lead to a full membership (citizenship) in the new country of settlement in political, social and cultural spheres. Bauböck further proposes that citizenship, as a normative concept, is 'a set of rights exercised by the individuals who hold the rights, equal for all citizens, and universally distributed within a political community, as well as a corresponding set of institutions guaranteeing these rights' (ibid 6). Bauböck suggests integration to include rights for citizens or members. These rights are civil, political and socials rights. In Finland these rights are granted to persons settling on a permanent basis. Once a person has negotiated the hurdle of admission, they are included as members of the state at a formal level although in reality the immigrants are in many cases hindered to exercise particularly the social rights, including employment. As Valtonen questions it (Valtonen 1997, 24), the issue of who can practice citizenship and on what terms, is not only a matter of the legal scope of citizenship and the formal nature of the rights entailed in it. It is also a matter of the non-political capacities of citizens, which derive from the social resources they command to which they have access.' Valtonen interprets these social resources to comprise human and social capital of an immigrant.

Integration process can be seen from a group perspective or from an individual perspective. Individual perspective is usually within the framework of psychological or socio-psychological disciplines. This means research focus is on a person's identity and relation

to co-ethnic group and to the majority. However, integration encompasses many phases and dimensions.

4.3 Conceptualising integration

A principle problem with the integration concept is how to define the integrating social (or other) system. Ekholm (1994, 17) criticises that while integration is considered to be a feature of a system, one part (immigrants, refugees) cannot be more or less integrated into it. Concept 'integrated' must therefore mean society as a system or ethnic group as a system. Integration has also normative connotations of being something positive, something to be strived for. Ekholm further states that migration research traditionally assumes that majority is a cohesive unity and the minority will integrate into it.

Immigrants can on the other hand integrate into their own ethnic group, to associations formed of many ethnic groups, to political or religious association etc. Some research indicates that in bigger immigrant communities internal integration followed by political and social organisation is an important factor, in Bourdieu's terms, in the battle for position or access to different fields.

Integration can be seen as taking place along two dimensions: the cultural and the structural (Ekholm 1994:18). *Cultural integration* refers to the process of learning cultural ways of an ethnic collective to which one does not belong, in much the same way as socialisation refers to the broad process for learning the cultural patterns of the ethnic collective to which one does belong. *Structural integration* is a process that aims at immigrants participating in society's economic, social and political forum from their own cultural and ethnic points. When this kind of integration takes place in two-way processes it is likely that ethnocultural collectives can be used to create a new, culturally homogeneous society ('melting pot'). Another alternative is that retention of the original ethnic

29

collectives result in an ethnically heterogeneous multi-ethnocultural society, - cultural pluralism or mosaic, like in Canada.

In this study I have used the following definition of integration: accommodation of immigrants and their acceptance as equally participating members in society, while at the same time, recognising the distinct cultural values and identities of various immigrant groups. (Bauböck, 38) These concepts can be merged into one concept: full participation in the new society.

4.4   Adaptation and acculturation

Adaptation can be defined to have many aspects: social, socio-psychological and cultural and economic adaptation. They are not mutually exclusive and the concept adaptation used in this study covers all aspects.

In the adaptation discourse, the immigrant and the combination of her personal characteristics are often seen as the central determinants of the adaptation outcome. Several researches have pointed out the importance of other factors such as background and circumstances of departure/settlement as well as immigration policy and attitudes in the host country (see e.g. Breton). A Swedish researcher, I. Svanberg, sees adaptation as an interface event or process, which in plural societies occurs simultaneously in many fronts. He defines adaptation as, 'an active process in which a new environment, its people, and institutions are encountered' (in Valtonen 1997, 120-121). If one defines adaptation from this point of view, Berry's Acculturation Model can be utilised.

In Berry's model, acculturation is defined as a process in which "individuals negotiate their way into life in a plural society' (Berry 1982). The model includes a useful distinction between assimilation and integration. According to Berry there is a difference between assimilation and integration in the individual's degree of retention of identity. When the two central issues, retention or loss of the group's identity and social relation with the wider

society, are posed simultaneously, a conceptual framework is generated and renders four

varieties of acculturation: Assimilation occurs when the group melts in the dominant

society. Separation takes place when a group retains its own identity and has no interaction

with the larger society. A group becomes marginalised when it loses its own identity and

culture without becoming a part of the dominant society. Integration refers to the situation

in which the group interacts with the larger society and also maintains its own identity.

Acculturation is hence a two-way process meaning mutual exchange of culture.

Acculturation may not lead to a change of the value system or reference group nor does it

necessarily entail acceptance by the out-group. It has also been pointed out that different

groups will aspire to different degrees of adaptation, depending on their motive for

migration.
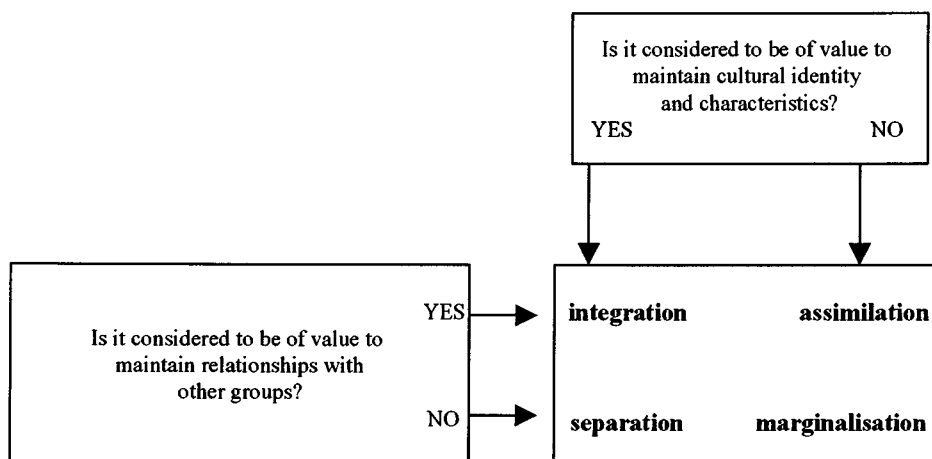
Figure 1 Berry's Acculturation Model (adapted from Berry 1992)

Berry (1992:278) recognises that each issue in the model could be responded to on an

attitudinal continuum. In this case, the outcome would probably need a degree for

adjustment. I find Berry's model very applicable in my research. Berry states (in personal

conversation December 1999) that Finland, being a socio-culturally homogenous

environment, provides a ground where all four adaptation alternatives are feasible outcomes

and their salience is unmitigated by pluralistic factors.

4.5 Identity and ethnicity

Identity is commonly divided into cultural and social identity. Cultural identity has widely been defined in the modern societies as identities of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, class and nationality. These identities are, however, in decline, claims Stuart Hall. He claims that new forms of identification are rising and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject (Hall&DuGay 1998,2).

The concept of **identity**, as I use it in my study, is seen in a broad sense to mean overall group identity, encompassing both ethnic and social identity. Liebkind (1989) has determined that individual's cultural or ethnic identity derives from the external factors which the individual utilises culture or ethnicity as a resource in identity building.

4.5.1 Dimensions of ethnic identity

I have for the purpose of this study, combined those two concepts and consider them to be one term (c.f. Liebkind 1994, 22). For the sake of clarity I call these two aspects of a person's identity an ethnic identity. In this discussion it is also important to look into the concept of ethnic group.

In general terms ethnic identity can be seen as a social-psychological phenomenon that derives from membership in an ethnic group. With the help of ethnic identity one anchors oneself to an ethnic group. Ethnic group is considered to consist of people, who have some distinct features in common and who have at least to some extend a common origin and who share a feeling of belonging together. Erik Allardt and Christian Starck (1981, 40) say that a group of people form an ethnic organisation only when there is a social organisation regulating the interaction between the group and the rest of the society. They argue that social organisation has rules that determine when and where ethnic features can be used. Similarly Isajiw (in Breton et al., 35-36) states that what is important is that ethnic group is a phenomenon that gives rise to social organisation, an objective phenomenon that provides

the structure for the ethnic community and identity, a subjective phenomenon that gives to individuals a sense of belonging and to a community a sense of oneness and historical meaning. Belonging to an ethnic group is determined by an individual and based on subjective choices.

One of the main features in this process of determining one's own ethnic identity is that the process is done by individuals themselves (Liebkind 1988, 38). Ethnic identity is transferred during one's lifetime and the diffusion starts during the childhood and hence formulates unconsciously person's personality towards the direction of an ethnic culture.

It is distinctive that people can belong to one ethnic group based on different reasons (Allardt&Starck 1981, 40-41). Isajiw determines that ethnic identity is a manner in which persons, on account of their ethnic origin, locate themselves psychologically in relation to one or more social systems, and in which they perceive others. Their location is in relation to those systems and can be divided into two aspects (Isajiw, 36) external and internal aspects of identity.

External aspects of identity refer to observable behaviour, both cultural and social. The internal aspect of identity refers to images, ideas, attitudes and feelings. Isajiw points out, however, that these two aspects are interconnected but may vary independently. An individual might have developed external aspects of her ethnic identity, for instance by speaking the native language, but has not developed internal aspect, e.g. does not feel secured and comfortable with the patterns of one's ethnic patterns against the cultural patterns of other groups or societies.

4.5.2 Ethnicity

Second concept, central to the migration research, is ethnicity. The discussion is equally multi-dimensional and inter-disciplinary as the concept of integration. Ethnicity can be seen as a resource or an obstacle depending on the social circumstances. Different ethnic

groups have different possibilities to integrate, visible minorities face more obstacles that the others (Breton et al 1990, 262).

Erik Allardt and Christian Starck (1981, 40) state that social organisation has rules that determine when and where ethnic features can be used. Usually some fields of social organisation are ethnically suitable for using ethnic features, for instance communicating in a certain language. There are also other fields where ethnicity plays a role, and some fields where ethnicity is of no consequence.

4.6 Conclusion

Integration is, indeed, a multi-faceted phenomenon with traces in many disciplines and can therefore be considered both multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. This fluid stage of concept development has influenced my decision to choose indicators that rise from the interviews. In studying the participation in social and political spheres of Finnish society indicators such as formulation of social networks and associations are used to reflect structural integration. Structural integration is also seen to take place through participation in political sphere, hence the women's interest in events of Finnish society were studied.

External cultural identity of women themselves and their children is used as an indicator in cultural integration. Adaptation process is studied through acculturation model where issues of maintaining relationship with other groups and question of maintaining one's own cultural identity and characteristics are used as indicators.

5 ANALYSIS

Underlying issues in the analysis of qualitative data. Characteristic for qualitative analysis, in contrast to quantitative analysis, is the requirement for absoluteness. This requirement of the absoluteness of a formulated rule or rules in qualitative analysis serves two purposes. Firstly, the absoluteness partly compensates for the fact that there are often so few cases studied, and therefore an average cannot be sought. These nine cases out of thousands of Russian working women in Finland, would not be enough to formulate a statistical average and could therefore be discarded since 'they do not prove a thing'. Secondly, in a qualitative analysis there is an underlying idea that by formulating a rule that holds throughout the material, the researcher tries to grasp some of the rules that people follow in their behaviour. One assumes that *regularities in people's behaviour are due to rule following, not proof of mechanic causal laws* (Alasuutari 1995, 15). I have tried to look at the integration phenomenon in my research with a question in mind: Have the women developed some kind of system in their behaviour that promotes or hinders their adaptation/integration.

According to the constructionist theorists the questions of truth in research answers is not a pre-requisite because there is no access to the truth (Eskola&Suoranta, 139) but we have to accept truth as it is given to us in a process of interpreting and understanding. Checking the 'truth' in case of my interviews would have even been impossible. There is no way one can find the 'traditional truth' in people's subjective accounts of events and episodes, instead it is central that reality or what is 'real' is forgotten and we are in pursuit of what is 'possible'. We forget one truth but instead pursue different truths and possible meanings of episodes (Eskola&Suoranta 141). The episodes the women have told me are in sense also

constructed, somehow produced. So when I am studying the social effect of the words, it is not central to assess the true content or truth of the stories because even the less true stories can influence the social reality (ibid 142). There are two methods to ensure the correctness of the information; humanistic and mechanistic. In mechanistic method the researcher volunteers only partial information about the purpose and objectives of the research (ibid 87). The humanistic way is almost the opposite, you create the trustful and confidential relationship with the research subject and assume that if the subject makes friends with the researcher and confidentiality is created, the research subjects are also honest to her.

Question of language. When conducting qualitative research the research objects almost always appear in language. With the help of language, people interpret actions and give meanings to it (Eskola 1971, 148). Qualitative research limits the world in its own way and manifests in form of a language. Human life is for a great part verbal communication, written and spoken. It is impossible to understand the human actions without language. Language is in that wider context part of my research objects, it is part of their social reality or realities. I have not been interested in language as such, although I had to make sure in advance that we had a common language. I was more interested in how the women use it to describe their experiences and their reality.

I had done some kind of coding prior to interviews by choosing topics for interview. The format of the semi-structured interview was created according to the previous research on immigrants and refugees and had a theoretical base on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of formulation of different capitals and fight over the resources in pursuit of control of different fields in the society. T Marshall's theory about the concept of citizenship provided a base for participation in economic, cultural and political spheres of society. By doing this, admittedly, I had already taken a first step towards interpreting the data.

5.1 Participation in social and political sphere

Social participation I have taken to mean social interaction and relationships. In it I have studied social contacts and formation of networks both on individual level and community level. Into the political participation, I have included the political activities whenever possible for immigrants in the Finnish political system. In addition, I have also included the interest women have shown in public and current affairs of Finnish political life.

5.1.1 Participation in the social sphere of Finnish society

In this research I have looked at the concept of personal social networks in two ways, depending whether they are based on *family and friendship* or *community*. I have then looked into these three categories more closely and analysed them in terms of frequency, nature and function of these contacts. All the women had moved to Finland because of personal family reasons. This reason for moving to Finland was either marriage to a Finnish man, or they were accompanying another family member, daughter, mother or husband.

'Those closest to me..' – Social networks based on family and friendship ...

The women were closely in touch with their immediate Russian family members. Many of the women had these immediate family members (parents, siblings) also living in Finland, but some were 'all alone in Finland' meaning they had their Finnish husbands here, but no Russian family members. There is, however, very close and tight contact with the Russian family members, whether they were settled in Russia or in Finland. The role of this immediate Russian family is both emotional and practical:

> *Yes, they (mother and father) are my support network.. When it happens that, for instance in*
>
> *November, when I do not have a single day-off. All weeks here in Lappeenranta I work and in*
>
> *the weekends, I jump into the train and go to lecture in Helsinki. Back on Sunday evening and*
>
> *then on Monday again to work, so, then, my mother comes to look after the children. My mother*
>
> *and father, they have been doing it since I was left alone, when, I do not say young, but when kids*

were small. They have looked after my children a lot.. They come here and when it is impossible, and I cannot just make it, then they look after my children.... We call every week and meet often, if only I have time-off, we go there, or they come here to look after my children. (Lydia).

...my sister was here before me, she was only eighteen when she came, she calls me every day and we speak many times. ....(Takes a telephone call in between). Yes, that was my mom, she lives also here, in the suburb of NN, we telephone often, every day (Anastasia).

Contacts with immediate Russian family members are important to all women interviewed. The family members offer besides emotional assistance and a chance to speak the Russian language, also practical help. These contacts had kept the same frequency and intensity regardless the length of residence of the women in Finland. There was no difference whether the person was married to a Finn or a Russian or lived without the spouse, the contacts with immediate Russian family members were tight and close. The nature of the contacts involved mutual responsibility and commitment. Many women had also taken a role of assisting the ailing, elderly relatives who had moved to Finland:

...My elderly aunt is here now (nods towards the living room). I take care of her...All my close relatives are here no, even my parents.... (Maria)

... and friends

Women said they have many friends, both Finnish and Russian. The nature of this friendship was very similar to the nature of contacts with Russian family members; mutual social support and in some cases shared responsibility. The friendship network had developed somewhat over time. Many of the friendships with other Russians were long lasting; they originate from the time together in Russia. Friends also appeared often in some kind of role when recollecting how the first employment in Finland was found. In some cases the friends were the ones, who got the jobs directly but more frequently they assisted in passing around information about vacancies.

Although the intensity and function of a friendship with Finnish women was similar to the relationship with the Russian family members, there was something different. One of the women was telling me after she described how she had got all her working assignments through her:

'After my personal crisis my Finnish friend came and told me let's go to one place...I ...it seems they can help you...she did not explain even what place she was taking me...it was the police.....and she...went with me as an interpreter...and the policeman explained me what my rights are here... .. I think, she (Finnish friend) is very honest, very sincere and I am too. But you see she gets irritated when I want to discuss my intimate problems. She does not want it. It is very difficult. That is why I stopped it. Yes, of course. Because the communication, the friendship, Russian is a very specific fact, so... for example Finnish friend and Russian friend it differs.... Quality. It is a grade difference. Finnish friends prefer most large distance between you and her, not so much time as we are used to pay to our friends in Russia. Here it is not usual to discuss such problems as we discuss with our Russian friends. You discuss it with specialists, like with psychologist and so on and these things we discuss in Russia with our friends. For Finns it looks something...so... striptized ... (laughs) uncomfortable. (Anastasia)

Finnish women, never Finnish male friends, seemed to have a function of providing coordinators to navigate in the Finnish society. The Russian friends on the other hand, fulfilled a very important function in the lives of the women as emotional support. It was not only a matter of language, several women talked about sharing the same attitude with other Russian women towards intimate issues as Anastasia above. This is very similar to how the Poles describe the differences between other Poles and Finns in Jaakkola's study (1994).

Contacts with the wider society

The wide interaction with the world outside immediate family members and circle of

friends was characteristic for the interviewed women. They all mentioned that they knew

many Finns. The nature of *'knowing many Finns'* is expressed by two interviewees:

'Most of my acquaintances, I think they are Finns. More Finns than Russians, now. If I walk in

the town centre, there is always somebody greeting me. That feels good. …I know them mainly

through the kiosk, and also from the course I attended, my classmates, they come here to greet me.'

(Jekaterina)

' I have it easy to live here. Because everybody knows me. Know who I am. I can go anywhere, at

the police station I know many people, because they come here to eat, I know them from many

places. If I have something, I can go to speak to the Mayor, because he also comes here to eat. I

see him almost daily, here. Yes, it is so nice that everyone knows, and everyone knows my

husband, because he has lived all his life here, this is a small place (Anastasia).

Work was influential in two ways of developing these contacts: first, it provided an

important instrument for the women to develop the contacts with mainly colleagues and

second, it acted as an arena to get to know people, also important ones, like in the previous

case, even from distance. Although these kind of contacts evidently develop over time, it

was significant, was that they all had had contacts from the very beginning of settlement as

told by a woman, who had stayed a shorter time, three years, in Finland:

'…. These ladies, I know them through my work…We write clearing and forwarding papers

together many times a week. They are lovely company. I come, and we talk about fashion, and all,

and of men, and who is marrying whom…(Anastasia).'

Associations

All women mentioned some kind of membership in an association. Most of the women are members of trade unions. Comprehensive knowledge about the functions of trade unions was expressed in these cases and the women knew the role of trade unions during the time of unemployment. One of the women had acted as an official in her local trade union unit and one person was an active member within the women's section of the local Chamber of Commerce. She expressed her membership there:

They appreciate me there, honestly. They understand me as a businesswoman and a mother. This combination, of being able to take cares of small children and still being a businesswoman. So, how you have made it in life, they can appreciate that.' (Lydia).

Ethnic associations

Women in the study did not express interest in participating in the activities of an ethnic Russian association except in one case, where her whole immediate family was involved in such activities. The women expressed almost negative attitude towards the idea of meeting other Russians in the form of a collective, organised activity. The women mentioned no political or other kind of disputes as a reason for this low participation. The reasons were personal, commonly expressed as by Olga;

'...just being a Russian is not good reason enough for me to become friends with another Russian.'

Nobody had any contacts with other immigrants, which is not surprising in a society like Finland with only few foreigners and no strong organisation based on ethnic lines.

Contacts with Finnish authorities

All the women had come in tight contact with Finnish authorities during their stay in Finland. Several of them had participated in some courses organised by the Employment Office in order to get orientated to the labour market (see also 5.3). The reception was

generally good, although several women during the interviews questioned the efficiency of the employment authorities.

All the women had approached Finnish authorities on their own initiative and usually in form of some dispute. It could be questioning a decision of a residence permit or taxation percentage, obtaining a licence from the betting authorities or approaching the housing authorities over the conflict with the neighbours. In all cases, the women felt the decision had been taken to their favour and expressed satisfaction about it.

5.1.2   Participation in political sphere

Immigrants to Finland, outside the Nordic countries and EU countries, can vote and be nominated as candidates in municipal election after having lived permanently in Finland for two years before the election year. In general elections, i.e. parliament or presidential elections, only Finnish citizens have the right to vole and to be nominated as candidates. Those three women who had obtained Finnish citizenship and were eligible to vote in general elections, had not only exercised their voting rights, but took pride in it:

'voting in every possible election (Maria).

There was, however, no interest expressed in participating in municipal election, nor in political party memberships. The women followed Finnish press, both magazines and newspapers, particularly local newspapers except for those two cases where the Finnish language knowledge was not sufficient to read newspapers. The women also tried to follow news in the Finnish TV, *'although the language is difficult and speech too fast.'* One of the women had had articles about Russia published in the local newspaper and several women had been interviewed in the context of Russian culture in the local mass media.

5.1.3 Obstacles – poor social acceptance and prevailing stereotypes

In spite of their long-term presence Russians are not a popular group of immigrants in Finland. Although the general attitude towards the foreigners in Finland have improved during the 90's, the attitudes towards the Russians in Finland have not improved (Jaakkola, 1999). The attitudes towards the Russian, Arabs and Somalis were the most negative amongst all immigrant groups. Recent study done by Pirjo Jukarainen on school children's attitudes towards their neighbours revealed most negative attitudes amongst the schoolchildren of Lappeenranta. This attitude came up in my study as well. The women did not generally mention word 'racism', but they all shared a feeling of not being socially accepted. This did not come up in official contacts with the Finns, but rather in every-day contacts with the wider society. In terms of Skutnabb-Kangas (264), the women expressed they had experienced 'individual racism' from a few Finns in separate incidents. Experiences were either related to general prejudices towards the Russians:

> 'Once I was starting a new job as a teacher and they told me, remember we have working morale here and you need to be in time for work...For no reason, I was new there, but just in case. And sometimes they tell me that, generally here in Finland when lessons start, the teachers are present. (Lydia).

Women also mentioned that they had not experienced difficulties with young people, but mainly with the elderly, 'who are still bitter about the war.' More difficult it was for women to encounter the stereotype of Russian woman as 'prostitute or criminal or in pursuit of an elderly Finnish man for marriage, or all these combined '. Particularly the younger women recalled several incidents when

> '....as soon as they know you are Russian, they start proposing all kinds of things (Galina).

The women felt, however, that these incidents had not limited their life, they had developed 'thick skin' and learnt not to care.

43

5.1.4 Summary and discussion

The research on social networks and the immigrant emphasise that ethnic networks reduce the short-term costs of settlement. In the initial stage of settlement, migrants' networks in the receiving area provide social capital to assist them in adapting to the new environment (e.g. Hagan, Valtonen 1997). Over time these networks, it has been argued, in the settlement area develop into ethnic associations that provide organisational support for newcomers and additional settings for circulating information and assistance.

Research done by Jacqueline Hagan on Guatemalan Maya community in the USA indicates that women and men develop different types of networks during their settlement although the networks start the same. Men's networks expanded over time within the circles of co-ethnics (based on recreation, work) and wider society in form of both 'strong' and 'weak' ties. Women's network, on the other hand, contracted over time and was limited to only a few co-ethnics after some time, mainly due to the nature of their employment as live-in maids. The benefits of men's expanded contacts became evident when there was a possibility to legalise the status in the USA and men managed to do it, not the women. Hagen shows how men managed to mobilise even the 'weak' ties when confronting the authorities in the legalisation issue.

Similar features of expanding the network can be seen in the cases of the Russian women. As described in this study, although the development of ethnic networks into ethnic associations in the area has taken place, the women have not actively participated in them. Associations have not provided the social capital in the initial stage of settlement but this role has been with a Finnish family member of with a person very close to the interviewee. One of the reasons could be that the ethnic community is very small in the researched area and although the women were aware of the existence of it, they felt they had nothing in common with the other Russians besides ethnic background. The other reason could be that the women who came to Finland come for personal reasons. This personal connection

means that they have somebody close to them who can provide them with the information about the Finnish society at the very initial phase of settlement.

There are several researches done on the social networks of refugee's communities in Finland (e.g. Valtonen 1997, 1999, Wahlbeck 1997, Alitolppa-Niitamo). These studies indicated that the social networks develop along the lines as determined by the societies in the countries of origin and the migrants carry along the characteristics of the network from their society and start constructing the new along similar pattern. Valtonen, in her research about Vietnamese refugees in Finland, argues that strong elements of mutual assistance exist in Vietnamese sub-groups and the refugees utilise first their own resources when in need of emotional or practical help. Mutual help can be seen inherent to the collective nature of their original culture.

This study indicates similar features of developing the network along the lines of collective vs. individualistic culture of the originating country. The less intensive contact between the co-ethnics can be traced in the individualistic features of the Russian culture. While seeking assistance, both emotional and practical, the women do not see the importance of acting collectively (in form of ethnic associations) in Finland, since they were not doing it in Russia either (Lonkila, 9-12), but instead utilised their own nuclear family members and a few close friends in constructing this mutual assistance and support system.

Work provides an important forum for development of contacts with wider society as previous studies about refugees and immigrants to Finland indicate (e.g. Jaakkola 1994, Valtonen 1999, Ekholm 1994, Alitolppa-Niitamo 1994, Breton et al 1990).

5.1.5 Conclusion

Social participation. This study indicates that there is an active participation of the immigrant Russian women in the social sphere of Finnish society. Two patterns or circles of social interaction can be traced. It looks that the women rebuild their social network

along the lines of their original nuclear family structures and another circle with the wider society.

In the first circle they maintain the high intensive contact level with the Russian family members regardless where they reside, and include one or two Russian friends, residing in Finland, into this circle of network. It looks that the women are not participating in community-based networks, but rather build their own, intensive, individual networks, starting in the family and expanding it with a few friends. In this inner network there is always one or several Finns. It is a Finnish spouse in case of a marriage or in other cases it is some other person very close. The function of this person is very important in guiding the women into the Finnish society.

The second circle or outer network with the wider society includes contacts they have established mainly at work and include many people from different fields of society. Lonkila found similar pattern of social networks amongst the Russian teachers' in St. Petersburg in his study. He concluded that this is due to 'as a social milieu providing arena for socialising, child care and informal resources mediated through work' and refers this pattern to originate from the Soviet times of shortage when surviving socialist shortages actually required contact with other professionals.' (109).

Ethnic association is not instrumental in providing a base for making contacts with the co-ethnics but they are chosen on several other criteria, not ethnicity only.

Prevailing stereotypes constitute some kind of obstacle for the women. They share a very strong feeling of not being socially acceptable by the Finns in general. They do not consider, however, this to limit their lives to greater extend. The women manage the situations by confronting them on individual level.

Political participation has been fulfilled partly in the case of these women. Exercising political rights of citizenship: those who had obtained the Finnish citizenship did exercise

their voting rights fully. On municipal level the interest was less intense although they are concerned with what is happening in the Finnish society at large.

Development of social capital. There are features of the development and utilisation of social contact networks that indicate that the women have developed social capital and managed to utilise their human capital to their advantage. One of these features is described in situations confronting the authorities in disputes. It also manifests the knowledge of extend of citizenship, by knowing the rights and defending them. It might be interpreted to be well developed type of social capital, bureaucratic capital.

5.2 Cultural integration in form of culture retention

I have looked into the ethnic identity of both women themselves and their children, (in one case the grandchildren), as the mothers (or grandmother) expressed it. I have analysed what women themselves mean by ethnic identity by looking beyond the answer to a direct question: Are you a Finn or Russian? Why do they consider themselves being Finnish or Russians? I have also analysed women's way of talking about Finnish and Russian societies, culture and people to assess values attached to them respectively. I have left out the issue of language from the case of mothers but looked at it in cases of children. It is natural that being the first generation immigrant and having learned the language in the childhood, the women have kept the language. The case is slightly different in case of their children, who were born in Finland or in Russia and some choices have been made whether to expose them to learn one or two languages. In case of these women I have also looked at the issue how they observe their cultural traditions and how they follow things happening in Russia. I have also paid attention to how the women consider themselves adapted into Finnish society and what does it mean to them.

In case of the ethnicity of the children I have analysed, besides the knowledge of Finnish and Russian languages, whether the women consider their children to be Russian or Finnish

47

and on what grounds they have made this statement, what are the elements of 'Finnishness or Russiansness' in the minds of the mothers.

5.2.1 Russian or Finnish?

The women considered themselves to be Russian or at least non-Finnish. One of the women who had stayed longest in Finland, said she is Finnish, but mentioned that she has always been Finnish, because she 'knew the language and culture from the childhood back in Russia, moving to Finland was returning home'. On the other hand she was describing her recent visit to her old hometown in Russia:

'It felt good, it felt like my own culture' (Maria)

To the women being Finnish would mean adapting to Finnish values, developing Finnish mentality, or 'feeling' Finnish' and this had not happened.

Society

The women talked in a very positive way about the Finnish society; how egalitarian it is, how easy to get access, how efficiently it works, and how well it provides services to people. And how clean it is in Finland, how well organised, easy to live as a single mother, and easy it is to get access to the inner circles of society. One person describes her relationship to a Finnish society:

'I believe I am useful in Finland. Finns think they know Russia and Russian society, but they do not know. I am doing something concrete here, I teach them something concrete that they can use later, real knowledge about Russia...I believe I am very useful to Finns, because I get an opportunity to work – and I do not have to be a stripper (Lydia).

There was a clear difference how the women talked about Russian society. They used occasionally extreme words like corruption, mad, catastrophe, desperate. Mainly the

women expressed how sad they are about the political, economic and social development of Russia.

> '...*Well, I feel pity for Russian, really, I feel pity for Russian people and whole system, it is so confused and mingled, and it is freedom, that the president has granted but it is dirty freedom. I do not think I can adopt anymore there. (Vera)*'

Those who had their relatives living in Russia were worried about their future and deteriorating economic situation and diminishing chances for ordinary people to get an economically secure life.

People and Culture

The situation was somewhat different when the women started talking about culture and people. *Russian people and culture* were referred in terms of openness, sympathetic, friendly, caring, more feminine and more masculine. One woman describes how Russian people differ from Finnish:

> *'There are differences between the individuals, of course, and I do not want to generalise. But on the other hand, in Russia if you are a crook, you are a crook. And fine people are really fine people. It is not quite like that here in Finland.' (Maria)*

There was a general feeling that the meaning of Russian culture is located very deep inside the women and it was easy for them to understand, often it was expressed in a way of 'just feeling Russian at heart'.

Finns were on the other hand not easy to understand at all and were frequently referred to 'the others' in relation to 'us'. One woman said it very concretely:

> *'a Finn is always Finnish, he is not us' (Lydia)*

She even went further in describing this division when talking about the Finnish mentality

in the form of a 'game of suffering':

'In the teachers' room, every Monday, everybody is sighing, they feel so tired and everyone expresses

this feeling of suffering. During the breaks they discuss how awful the teachers have been. And

sighs again. I cannot go there and say: hey it is wonderful, I like being a teacher and I like my

students! And, hey! What a wonderful lesson I just had with them. I just sit there quietly." And

Finns think they have to suffer a bit. An example, well, now I have an example, yes, this takes

place in a teachers' room. And it is Monday or Tuesday morning or any morning, for that matter

and everybody is very tired and everybody has to (starts sighing a lot) keep it up, this teaching. A

lot. Life has to be a bit of suffering, then you are OK person. And I have very rarely problems

with the students; of course I have them, but very rarely. I just cannot be sitting there at the

teachers' room and complaining... I think life is not suffering. But I know that I cannot start

telling them that wonderful, all students are so wonderful and good, then......(Lydia).

Finns were described as people who are cold and closed while Russian people are hearty

and friendly, emotional even passionate. Particularly Finnish men were described as people

who are not talkative and talk only when and if there is something to say. Finnish women

were described in contrast to Russian women who look after themselves, are not afraid to

show that they are feminine and who are keen on fashion and dressing up.

5.2.2   Children

'My child has Russian heart but Finnish manners...'

The women considered their children to be Finnish, or in some cases both Finnish and

Russian. Being Finnish meant speaking Finnish language fluently and acting in a 'Finnish

way' when outside the home. But it is important for the women that home provided a

secured place for children to be Russian if they so wish, because

'In Finland one has to be Finnish.' (Valentina)

Retention of Russian culture was a concern for all mothers. This culture retention meant mainly speaking the Russian language and the grandmother talked about her role in retaining Russian culture;

> *...grandchildren...they are my advertisement. I have three kinds of duties, supervise that (the child we talked about) does his Russian homework and practises for music lesson and I read Russian books for him (Olga).*

All the children except in one case spoke Russian at home. In the exceptional case the mother had yielded to the wish of the Finnish father of not speaking Russian with the children at home, although she regretted the decision now and was happy about her daughter studying Russian as a second language. All the children went to ordinary Finnish speaking schools, even if there is an option of Russian school in both towns. One woman expressed the reason:

> *'..Ooh, the Russian school is meant for Finnish children, for those not speaking Russian.' (Olga)*

Bi-lingualism was greatly emphasised by all mothers and the grandmother. There was a common understanding that a good language skill in both Russian and Finnish language together with a strong cultural base will mean success to the children expressed one woman. The women were particularly keen to point out that their children were so bi-lingual that

> *'Russians cannot know she speaks so perfect Finnish, they think Russian is her mother tongue and vice versa'. (Valentina).*

The women also emphasised the fact that their children had many Finnish friends, and in no one case was it mentioned that the children have any friends of Russian origin. Issues

51

like going to Finnish school, learning good, often perfect Finnish, having many Finnish friends were important and accepted by the mothers. What worried them was how quickly the cultural changes happened. Russian language was generally not a problem; home was a place reserved for speaking Russian. The quick adaptation of Finnish youth's sub-culture was worrying the women, 'piercing the skin and colouring hair in bright colours' was considered as a sign of this Finnish sub-culture and not welcomed, although at the same time they expressed the wish to raise the children as bi-cultural. Equally, losing interest in Russian high culture like classical music and literature and fine arts was worrying the mothers. Children's hobbies often reflected values that are currently high in Finland, sports and computer skills. Knowledge of English language, even rudimentary, was very important to the women and they all mentioned it as a special credit due to the Finnish education system.

The mothers had stories like when describing the effects of living in Finland:

yes, she goes to this primary school here, and takes lessons in modelling, and drawing and English and every day she dances show-dances. Busy every day...even, on Saturdays. Piano, but you know, she has not played for a long time. ... .My daughter wants to change religion, because it is difficult to be orthodox, wants to be Lutheran. I do not know, she cannot change...I will talk to the teacher, because she is still young and does not know yet, too young. ...My daughter wants a computer, bicycle, to travel. She is a good student, good grades, but does not believe me. ...My daughter is Finnish, her father is Russian but she is Finnish. It took three years, now she does not want to go to the Russian side of the boarder, yes, once she was there with her class. In Wyborg. She has Finnish friends, not Russian. No, she has turned into a Finn, in Russia children are different. I can say that my daughter is Finnish. Russian in her is that she likes clothes and make-up. Russian women like clothes and make-up, yes she is like by nature. But her friend, is like that too. She lives just next-door. Similar, she is. I remember, they had four girls in the class, typical Finnish girls all of them.. They all wore jogging shoes and pants. I asked my daughter, do you want a dress or me to buy you some nice pants instead. No need, she said, just ordinary

blouses. And then all that changed, now she wants to wear different shoes and pants every day. I

tell her, enough! (Laughs). I think it is good that she is so Finnish, we are in Finland now. I

know many children without friends. My daughter has million friends, calling every minute. If they

have some sports at school, she is the captain, she is very sporty. (Anastasia).

In the case of the teenagers the worry was even deeper. The mothers talked about

teenagers' alienation from the Russian culture, 'wading away from Russian culture and not

entering the Finnish culture.' Different school systems had also affected those children

who had already started schooling in Russia, and different concepts of 'freedom' had caused

clashes in school between the pupils and teachers.

Women had high expectations regarding the future of their children, they hoped them to

get into a university and one said it very clearly.

'I am doing all this (moving to Finland) for my child to have university education.' (Valentina)

5.2.3   Home - a cultural oasis

Russian culture, manners and traditions were nurtured at home. I conducted the interviews in

the homes of the women, except in two cases. One interview was done at a person's

working place and the other at my home upon the interviewee's request. In this particular

case I had an other opportunity to visit her home. In the homes of these women, there

were some easily recognised memorabilia from Russia: paintings, pictures of relatives in

Russia, Russian books, overall colour of the interior design was dark, enhanced often by

dark leather furniture, and the windows were framed with heavy curtains and floor covered

by oriental carpets and in every home there was a piano.

For the interviewed women home was a place for eating Russian food, listening to Russian

music, and watching Russian TV and reading Russian newspapers regularly. One woman

described this cultural safety of home in contrast to the life outside and the double ethnic identities:

'... the children are Russian and Finnish, but it is quite clear for them that they accept Finns and behave like Finns when they are at school, and when they come home, then they switch, and turn Russians. (Lydia)

5.2.4 Summary and discussion

There are features of *external cultural identity* that are very prominent in the lives of the interviewed women. They share a very positive attitude towards speaking Russian with the children. Russian traditions are respected at home, and home is kept as a cultural oasis and Russian events are closely followed. Similarly some internal features of ethnic identity gain prominence in women's descriptions of Russian vs. Finnish differences. The women in the study expressed very positive opinion and respect towards the Finnish society and were sad about the recent developments of Russia. This was expressed in the concern for the 'common man' in Russia and diminishing chances of 'making it' for ordinary people. The women describe features of Russian people and culture in very positive terms. Finns and the Finnish culture is described with terms reflecting distance and in some cases Finnish cultural features appear strange to the women.

In this kind of study it is difficult to go beyond recognising some signs of attitudes and values. To measure extend of these values or attitudes would require different approach. One could, however, conclude in Isajiw's terms that the women have retained some aspects of internal, Russian identity in form of the images, ideas, attitudes and feelings (in Breton et al., 38). Both external and internal aspects of culture retention can be traced.

Children. Mothers consider children's ethnic identity to be mainly Finnish, because they speak the Finnish language fluently. Mothers are somewhat worried about the quick changes of the children in terms of adapting to Finnish youth-culture. They value bi-

lingualism in children and all children go to Finnish schools. Women have high educational expectations for the children and believe Finland can provide opportunities for that.

To some extend one could see the tendencies of 'Hansen's hypothesis' in case of the second generation Russians. The theory states that second generation immigrants remove themselves or rebel against their ethnic group and the third wishes to return to it, or 'what the son wishes to forget the son's son wishes to remember' (in Breton et al., 38). Such fears were expressed by many and one mother described her daughter's life in Finland along those lines (above) and particularly the views expressed by the mothers of teenagers. It appears that the woman in study want to give sound Russian base, originating from home, for their children to develop a new identity, involving features from both.

Adaptation process

Generally the women considered to have adapted quite well to the Finnish culture although there were cases when adptation to Finland was considered to be a very difficult task for anybody. Adaptation was interpreted in three ways: in *the first way*, adaptation was equal to be socially accepted. Some of the women were very lucky that they were socially accepted by the society at large. This acceptance meant that people greeted them in the streets, they were known by many, or people popped in to greet them spontaneously at home or at working places. *In the second way*, adaptation means being employed full-time. Those women who had part-time work mentioned that they would be adapted if only they had full time work. *The third way* differed from the other two ways and meant knowing Finnish customs and traditions and language. One of the language teachers mentioned that because she cannot speak perfect, flawless Finnish, she cannot consider herself to be adapted, and maybe never will.

Acculturation model

It is possible to use Berry's model in analysing the acculturation attitudes of the interviewed women. In this model members of the minority group assess their attitudes towards two basic issues (Berry et al., 278)

Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?

Is it considered to be of value to maintain own cultural identity and characteristics?

In my study I have opted to analyse following items from the interviews conducted with the women. I will start the analysis with 'it is considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?'

I am looking into the issue through contacts with Finns and Finnish society mainly as indicated in chapter 5.1. dealing with the social contact. All women had many contacts with Finns beyond immediate family members. They often had regular contacts with their colleagues, and had expanded these contacts outside the workplaces. Even in the cases where the persons could not speak fluent Finnish, they described their contacts, in positive terms and emphasising the importance. The importance of maintaining relationships with Finns also can be manifested in frequent memberships in Finnish associations (see also p 44).

If using Berry's model in issue 1, then it can be stated that it is of value to maintain relationships with Finns.

Secondly I look at how the interviewed Russian women consider the value of maintaining their cultural identity and characteristics. Here I have distinguished two forums: at home and at work.

Home. External ethnic features (modified from Isajiw) can be distinguished. All women attach great value to Russian language, all women have traits of Russian culture exposed at

home. They all value Russian food by cooking it and by bringing Russian pastries and bread, pasha, when visiting Russia. They all regularly followed what is going on in Russia, read Russian newspapers and watched TV programmes from Russian TV and even visited Russia frequently. Into the external ethnic features I have also included the importance of teaching children Russian language. They all were of the opinion that teaching Russian language was important to children or grandchildren. At home I would argue that the women have maintained their ethnic identity. Analysing the acculturation attitude the women have adapted the acculturation strategy of integration.

Work. Situation is slightly different in work and there are slight adjustments in the strategy some women have adopted. At workplaces some evidence, albeit slight, indicates that women lean towards assimilation as illustrated by the description of the incident at the teachers' room (above). Even if they do not accept this kind of assimilating behaviour at heart, they do it under the pressure of society. In one instance, a woman described that she is a person of two cultures, while the one culture was Russian language skills and the second was doing things the way Finns do them. It looks that while outside their homes, at workplaces, the women did not want to draw negative attention, they did not want get the feeling of being socially not accepted. The way to tackle this was 'to behave like a Finn'. This suggests that outside their homes, they do not have other option but to appear to assimilate.

5.2.5   Conclusion

Development of cultural capital. It is not possible within the framework of this study verify the extend of retained values of the original culture and adapted values of the new culture. My study, however, indicates that the process of cultural changes is going on within the interviewees. They express, however, that they have acquired certain aspects of Finnish culture, which assists them in coping with different situations in life, and assist them in problem solving. This study also indicates that Russian culture is appreciated and valued by the interviewees and home is a cultural oasis where things connected to Russia and Russian

culture is nurtured and can nourish. Part of this cultural capital, particularly in the form of Russian language, is also transferred to children, although the speed of cultural change is worrying the women.

5.3 Work

In this study the women talk about their working life in Finland. They give a subjective account on how they have entered into the economic field of Finnish society; they also talk about their motifs and attitude towards work and they describe their typical working day as well as their future plans and goals in life.

The women described access to the Finnish labour market as a challenging process.

5.3.1 Strategies used to enter the labour markets

In Finland it is possible to use a variety of strategies to gain access to the labour market. Institutional support is offered in form of labour market courses, apprenticeships and on-the-job practice administered by the Employment Office. Private contacts and own initiative form another pool of strategies. The interviewed women had used both strategies but for different purposes.

Institutional contacts. The women utilised institutional support to some extend in seeking job although this group of Russian women do not automatically participate in pre-orcestrated courses and programmes (language and/or orientation courses) as e.g. refugees and Ingrian re-migrants do. Institutional support was in form of participating in language training and occasionally in short courses of labour-market orientation courses. Nobody had, however, got their first, or second or third jobs for that matter, though Employment office and the women considered officials 'inefficient' in this respect. Similar attitude can be traced in a study regarding the immigrants' faith in the Finnish authorities (Jasinskaja-Lahti& Liebkindt 1997). Valtonen's findings about the refugee's entry to the labour markets are somewhat

different. She concluded that 'to the refugees the strategies to employment revolve primarily around the initiatives organised by the official employment services, which indicates strong reliance upon formal mechanisms for labour market insertion' (Valtonen 1997, 65).

Own contacts. The interviewed women had used a variety of strategies to get the first job in Finland; replying newspaper advertisements, participating in voluntary work, using existing contacts of their friends and family members, both Russian and Finnish. Finding the first employment was not very easy, straightforward or a quick process and the women used imagination, even creativity, to find employment.

'I realised soon that there was no one is going to offer me a job, because of my age. . I participated in vocational courses and got this idea about my own business. In this town I cannot get work according to my education.... (Jekaterina)'

'I am looking for job everywhere I can...I have found them mostly with the help of my Finnish friend...so my friend and use of publicity in the newspapers have helped me find work....I have tried to market myself but it is rather difficult' (Alla).

' First job I found by looking through the yellow pages of the telephone catalogue. I sent application letters to three companies I found there. And got all of them....' (Galina)

'When we moved to Finland, I called the company, and got some work to translate and interpret. Then through newspapers, and being interviewed.' (Lydia)

Certain level of knowledge about the rules of society is required to be able to operate in a new society in addition to knowing the basics of the local language. It seems that the women demonstrated this knowledge in form of knowing that other channels exist beyond the official channels through the Employment Office. In terms of different 'capitals'; they had capacity to develop and utilise to their advantage the acquired human capital. If they

were not in the possession of adequate human capital, they acquired it. This is described by two of the interviewees:

'Yes, I was reading a newspaper, after I had finished this training at the Labour office, yes, I see, a new car sales depot is opening. I speak with the director, I speak with the owner and he thinks, for a long time and says...mmm, you speak bad Finnish, I say, I know, but you have Russian customers, and I know it all, spare parts and cars...He thinks for a long time...yes, I got the job... (Valentina)'

'...I managed by chance...we had a meeting for our Club and one person from town council came to talk to us....and I took up this issue of reading aloud to Russian children...and I did that for a year voluntarily...Then my friend recommended me to teach her classes...(Olga)'

The women have used systematically developed social contacts. They unanimously took up an issue that it is important to 'get your foot' in first and from that on the progress is easier; after that the word goes around. Training courses organised by the Employment Office have played a certain role in women getting acquainted with the Finnish system, in developing the social and cultural capital. They have provided the women with new ideas, new contacts and more importantly provided them with the training place. Self-confidence gained was demonstrated by Anastasia who after reading the newspaper walked into a car dealer and wanted the job without it ever being advertised. Self-confidence was also important, they all believed they could get jobs and were ready to try something new if jobs related to their previous education or training could not be found.

Valtonen and Wahlback conclude in their studies that in Finland, the supply of adequate and appropriate language and orientation courses and/or trainings offered to immigrants is an inclusive feature of the society. In this context the institutional support the women obtained was directing the women towards the definite entry towards the labour markets,

although it is not sufficient alone but women's own contacts, efforts and determination play a significant role in securing the entry to the labour market.

Two of the women had gone into entrepreneurship after some time in Finland. Entrepreneurship demands specific personal qualities, resources and responsibilities. One of the women had not ventured into ethnic employment which is not, very common in Finland. She had gone into a small-scale retail business, which requires even more resources and skills. In this case the job did not provide any kind of a cushion against a shock of adjustment or integration, as can be seen in cases of, for instance, ethnic restaurants etc. but she was competing in the field of native Finns. The other person had expanded her teaching jobs into a private business and expanded her field of expertise.

5.3.2   Problems of transferring human capital

When adult immigrants arrive in the new country, they carry along education, often both primary and secondary, and working experience and some special skills. These skills are often not enough to enter the labour market of a resettling country, but some kind of 'requalification' has to take place. Acquiring the necessary language skills is one of the common prerequisites for an immigrant to enter the labour market even at the lowest level. Situation is more complicated for well-educated professionals, who need to seek professional reaccreditation to get admission to the labour market of the new country. This professional reaccreditation was a common problem faced by the women interviewed.

Persons in the fields of technology and culture experienced the biggest problem in accreditation and it resulted in occupational downgrading. The women who had technical training did not find work in their fields of education and ended up working in small private companies with mainly export related clerical duties. Russian language teachers, or professionals who operate in the field of Russian language faced less problems in accreditation. Popularity of Russian language courses in Lappeenranta-Imatra area has created a situation where professional Russian teachers and native speakers are in high

demand. Situation is similar to the Russian-Finnish interpreters. In entering the labour

market accreditation was not the only problem, also differences in educational tradition

between the countries could pose an obstacle:

> *'You see, culturology is, was, a course in every Russian institute, at every Russian University. In*
>
> *polytechnics, in science and so on, it is there a duty, or obligatory, course, not for a few but for all.*
>
> *But here in Finland you have narrow education and even humanists have no*
>
> *such...foundation...education as we have. For example. I have worked with interpreters and*
>
> *translators and they were surprised what for are they to know the history of art. We are*
>
> *translators, they say. Why should we know it? .... it is surprising for me. ..so...I have*
>
> *very.....aa...little places to work at. In Russia I may in every institute and every university and*
>
> *here there are problems in that it is not the subject for all. (Alla)'*

The interviewed Russian women who had worked in Russia prior to their departure had all

experienced occupational shift, some even occupational downgrading and/or mis-

placement; from speech therapist to Russian language teacher, engineer to interpreter,

guide to teacher, university lecturer to part-time lecturer, researcher to clerk. Those who

had moved to Finland soon after graduating, got jobs in teaching professions and those

without any secondary training got further vocational training in Finland and were now in

positions matching their Finnish qualifications. It is notable that all women spoke Russian

daily at work. All women had got their first jobs in Finland in a field somehow connected

to the Russian language. The reason for being employed to their first jobs was not always

that they were fluent Russian speakers but in all cases it was a contributing factor.

Finnish language skills are a common barrier to enter the labour market. A recent study by

Seppo Paananen argues that Finnish language skill is a barrier for foreigners to get jobs

even if the language skills are not needed in the job or the job seekers master enough

Finnish to manage the job. The employers often consider Finnish language skill to be a

sign of commitment of the immigrant to the country and a marker of successful integration and therefore prefer to employ immigrants with 'excellent Finnish skills'.

The women in this study had their first jobs in the field of Russian language or culture. They were then operating in the field of their own expertise and one can assume that even less perfect Finnish language skill was accepted under these special circumstances.

5.3.3 Work – here and now

There seems to be specific features in women describing their work although two things are clear, they all have a very strong motive to work and consider work to be an important part of life.

> '..I have always worked...I never developed routines to be a housewife...I like work, I think it is wonderful..... (Lydia) ....I said, I will work for no fee, as long as I can work.... (Olga) ...if you do not develop anything, you can go to the graveyard, my lifestyle includes work, and I had never known this business of unemployment, until I came to Finland. ...(Jekaterina) I felt, instead of being at home I could do something, useful .... (Valentina).. ....sometimes I lecture without payment.. (Alla). ....I made a mistake when I moved to the other company, work got finished.... (Maria)'

Strong will to work. Work forms an important part in these women's lives, so important that several of them were willing to start working for free if nothing else was offered. The women had worked all their lives, and even imagining a life without work was painful mainly because of fear of social isolation and degradation of self-confidence. One woman talks about her short period of unemployment:

> '.. Then I felt I was good for nothing. (Vera)'

and an other woman what she thinks about the unemployed:

....unemployed people are just useless, good for nothing people (Valentina)

When the women were describing their typical working day, they structured them in lines

resembling one of the main stories in Matti Kortteinens work about working life of Finnish

men. He mentions that the main story is formulated in three stages; it has been hard, has

tried hard to make it and finally; has made it and is proud of it (43). This 'being proud'

means in the case of these Russian women, getting social acceptance through work, a fact

that came up constantly during the interviews.

'.. so much work, ...I have no free time...have to run everywhere, and be sharp , ... from

morning till evening.   (Lydia).. '

'...too much rush at work...too much work... I am happy there but sometimes tired, because we

are too few... good workplace, good work mates, it is nice... we laugh often, we have parties,

Christmas parties, and we go to discos... (Anastasia)'

'..at work we run ,because you have to keep the customers happy...to provide good service...

(Valentina) '

They also expressed happiness and satisfaction about their work. This pride was both

professional pride and again social acceptance.

'....I am happy at work, teaching is in my blood, and I have no conflicts with my students, easy

to get along with then. no problems with discipline ....there is trust in the classroom....

...(Maria)'

'..sometimes I work under a very tight schedule....I have very interesting work, maybe I am

lucky, but I have always liked my work and environment....(Vera).'

'..rush, rush.....but people come in to chat with me when I am in the kiosk,....in town everybody

knows me...it is nice. (Jekaterina)'

64

When the women were describing their work they included similar elements into it: rush, devotion, satisfaction, importance of social respect and appreciation . The way they describe their everyday life indicates that it invariably includes element of work. They talked about unemployed people in very negative terms. They also talked about work in similar terms that can be found in Matti Kortteinen's work about the Finnish Employment as a Form of Culture. Kortteinen explains how the Finnish men talk about a cultural apriority related to success, or making it in life . According to this apriory, by being successful, by making it in life, one achieves respected and appreciated social status (Kortteinen 1992, 61). There was devotion, and they appreciate themselves. They all liked their work, many commented that they have good colleagues and positive atmosphere at their workplaces. Many also described the rush and tight time schedule at work, a few employees and plenty of work. They all expressed satisfaction and expressed feeling of importance, similar to Finnish men and also devotion to their work, a feature that Kortteinen attributes to Finnish women when talking about their work (ibid, 73).

Valtonen found similar features in her study, interdependence meaning (1997, 84) the making of ties and bonding in reciprocal/exchange relationships with the surrounding society. The individual is participating in contributing as well as receiving capacity. Marshall's concept of citizen's duties and rights are located here. The women expressed reciprocating factor with the society very strongly, some kind of interdependence, when talking about their motives to work. The issue is well illustrated by one of the interviewees when she is describing her short period of unemployment:

> 'Well, I have been without work. It was tough. ..because of economic situations, getting
>
> along. Actually I was declared redundant soon after I had bought the house, maybe one
>
> month after that. It is like this in a company, but life is life...All this economic
>
> responsibility .. Of course I felt isolated. Especially when all neighbours go to work, I
>
> felt I was good for nothing., so I wanted a new job, and quick. Any job. And it is so

hard when they tell you no, no, all the time. And losing the hope, not knowing about

the future, it has been worst. (Jekaterina) '

5.3.4 Future, goals and priorities

When talking about the goals and priorities for the future, two different orders can be

distinguished: first always comes the well being of the children and then their own

priorities. The future of the children was the most important thing for all women (who

were mothers). There was one, unanimous reason above all: children had better educational

prospects in Finland.

When talking about themselves the women mentioned issues related to their work;

improving their qualifications, further studies, increased business, full-time employment,

staying employed, or establishing own company.

The women foresaw their future in Finland and while recognising the present difficult

political and economic situation in Russia they mentioned that 'their hearts were still in

Russia', although none of them planned on moving back or to any other country. Reasons

for remaining in Finland were either the confused situation in Russia or the wish to stay

with their children's families or both reasons combined. The woman who had her child

married here, wanted to stay with her grandchildren and had pushed her own wishes to the

background but saw a possibility to retire in Russia but even then as a short time solution.

In migration research it is commonly considered that willingness to return to the country

of origin to be an indicator for integration (Ekholm 1994, 40). In this light all the women

can be considered well-adjusted. Poles in Finland (Jaakkola 1994, 156) indicate similar

research findings.

5.3.5 Summary and discussion

Valtonen introduces the concept of 'parity' (1997, 66) while examining the dilemma of severe occupational downgrading. Parity can be defined as 'equivalency in value' or 'correspondence'. If the women who are obviously downgraded and enter the labour market at a level much lower than their departure level, they obviously are not at par with their 'resources' or 'human capital'. Neither are they at par with their professional colleagues of local origin. So, although some structural integration is taking place, in the form of that all women are employed, there is a need to look into the type of jobs and mobility in those jobs.

The situation of the interviewed women can be analysed within the concept of parity. Although they all had gained access to the Finnish labour market, their parity was reached only partly. This discrepancy can be detected on two levels: they were not employed at the capacity of their 'resources' or 'capital' and/or their employment conditions were only part-time, even if they wanted full-time jobs. Similar under-utilisation of human capital was found in Jaakkola's study about Polish immigrants in Finland (Jaakkola in Liebkind 1994, 134-6). The Poles found it difficult to find work equivalent to their education at least in the early phase of settlement. In Jaakkola's study the reason for lower level of entry was accredited to the inadequate Finnish language skills and Jaakkola concluded that the occupational mobility took direction upwards after the language abilities improved. In this study there was some mobility in the case of the women interviewed. A common entry point to all the women was, however, in the field of Russian language. In all cases the first jobs the women had were somehow connected with the Russian language or Russian culture.

Occupational downgrading is even more serious amongst those professionally trained refugees who had found work in Finland (Valtonen 1999).

Integration of the Russian women into labour markets in a structural way has taken place, not on the lowest level, and not at par with their qualifications either. Their positions are not quite equal to their capacity, but close to it. Women felt their capabilities were slightly under utilised in terms of their professional and educational capacity and in terms of time worked. Occupational downgrading was noticeable. Those who had stayed longer in Finland and changed jobs over time, reported slight upward mobility. They expressed satisfaction about being in control of their time and work. Women had utilised government services to some extend by participating in the labour market adjustment courses including Finnish language courses. Employment office did not, however, play a significant role in women finding employment. First employment was regularly found through own initiative by contacting directly with employers or more frequently, through newspaper advertisements. All the first jobs were in the field of Russian language and/or culture. Most frequently women were employed as Russian language teachers or interpreters. The scope of jobs widened slightly in subsequent jobs but never really left the field of Russian language/culture, typically women moved from interpreter to teacher/lecturer or to clerical export duties. During the time of interview two women worked in their own enterprises.

The women described their work in positive terms. Work was for them another source of satisfaction in life in addition to children. They expressed pride, even joy, when talking about their work. They were motivated to work and associated work with respected and appreciated status in the society. They considered work to be the most important way of participating in the functions of society.

Their problems always related to the issue of being socially accepted. They reported no incidents of discrimination, or racism related to work and generally referred to their colleagues as a 'good team' and in most cases included themselves to be part of that team. In these cases women described themselves to be part of 'us' in relation to the colleagues. However, all women recalled unpleasant incidents with Finns. The women encountered

these incidents frequently at personal level and felt they were on a personal campaign against the stereotype of a Russian woman as 'prostitute, criminal or at least in pursuit of elderly man to marry'. This battle, or campaign, they described hurtful, but had learned 'not to care' and did not feel it had restricted their life.

Women's future plans, goals and priorities were connected either with their professional future or with their children. Nobody was ready to return to Russia, mainly because of the 'confused situation' over there, although all the women closely and regularly followed the situation in Russia. All women expressed hope of their children getting far with education and felt Finland was offering better chances for that.

The concept of citizenship can be looked at and analysed from two angles. *A private dimension* to citizenship in the form of personal goals and priorities in one's life was included into the concept of citizenship by Valtonen (1997). She claims that satisfaction of immigrants, or positive outlook, depend on how the individual envisioned her future prospects — whether she sees her participatory activity as leading to the attainment of goals, or as being 'on track'. The situation is opposite when immigrants do not feel that their work is meaningful or useful. They loose hope and their faith on the future when faced with the prospect of 'wasting' the productive years of life (Valtonen 1997,68). In a society like Finland, where high values are attached to work and work also determines your position in the society, work seems to play a very important role in women feeling they are participating in the society. This study indicates that the most powerful priority of the women was the well being of their children. Although they considered themselves not having achieved upward social mobility, they had high hopes for their children, they strongly believed their children would achieve this upward mobility on socio-economic scale.

It seems appropriate to say that the interviewed women had a positive outlook in life. Their goals, well being of the children and increasing professional competence or establishing

own business or full-time work, were not out of line of their present activities; children were doing well at school, and professional plans were underway in many cases.

Hirstiö-Snellman in her study about the immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Helsinki area concluded that the challenges these immigrants face come after the initially heavy reliance on public integration measures, at a time when they are 'left alone', without the continuous support of the authorities. The immigrants from the Soviet Union regard their control capabilities as poor; they have little idea on how to pursue their goals and they feel they cannot cope with the situation alone' (Hirstiö-Snellman 1994, 101). My study indicates that the women had overcome most of those barriers; they had a strong will to work, they demonstrated success in how to pursue their goals and had managed in situations when they had to confront Finnish authorities in disputes. once the immigrants have overcome the barrier of 'lack of bureaucratic capital' they have succeeded in their efforts.

Public parameters of citizenship is, according to Marshall, the legislation of the country to ensure the right to the citizens. This is, in Finland, done at the time of entry to the country. The language and training courses can be seen as activities of granting such rights. In the case of Russian women who have entered the country for personal reasons, they are not automatically included in these programmes, but need to seek admission, and in some cases pursue the authorities. It requires certain level of social capital to know about the courses and request admission to them. In a few cases the women recalled attending these courses and mentioned they were not for immigrants and/or refugees only but the participants were both Finns and foreigners.

Development of social capital in relation to work. There is indication that social capital was developed: utilisation of social networks in getting a job, particularly the first job. Similarly, attending the orientation courses or language course requires societal capital to know how the society, or bureaucracy works. In addition, the women share common

features: strong will to work, their motivation to work is to be useful members of the society, they expressed the reciprocating nature of work, desire to exercise their duty as a member of a society.

6 CONCLUSION

Integration is in the present migration discourse described as a complicated, multi-faceted process with both inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary features in it (Bauböck, Valtonen). My attempt to explain it by having a closer look into a integration process of one single group, Russian working women, has confirmed once again, that integration process of the immigrants is dealing with many issues and many levels, including time-level, and that finding one thing to describe it all, is not possible. There are, however, some common features in the integration process as the interviewed women explained it.

Integration, as I have studied it has two dimensions:

- Exercising duties and rights of citizenship in social, economic and political spheres of life and hence participating in those fields.

- This participation involves the development of human, social and cultural capital of an immigrant. The development of these capitals take place all the time and changes over time.

6.1 Participating in different spheres of society

If integration is seen as exercising rights and duties of citizenship, in the form of public feature of citizenship in the economic, social and political spheres of society, then it can be argued that the women in the study are considered to be well integrated. Private features of

citizenship, when seen in form of personal goals and priorities have also been materialised and can hence be interpreted as an indication of successful participation or integration.

6.1.1 Participating in social sphere

Looking at the participation of the women in *social sphere*, some distinct features can be traced in the way the women have developed social contacts.

I would like to argue that the Russian women interviewed have developed two circles of networks. Their first network includes high intensity contact, strong ties, with their nuclear family and close friends. These contacts seem to provide the women with emotional and concrete support. In every case this close contact network includes, at least initially, one Finn. This close person, a mediator, is important in introducing the functions of the society, be they formal functions of different institutions or providing information about vacancies. This study indicates that the presence of this kind of a person is influential in developing the 'cultural' capital for the women to be able to orientate in the society. Also from the very beginning, the women have developed another circle of contacts. Into this network they include contacts with wider society, mainly with Finns and could be described as 'weak ties' by frequency and nature. This second network is growing during their stay and provides the women the feeling of social acceptance, which greatly contributes to their well-being. It can be argued that these contacts, by the nature of them being wide and reaching across all fields of the society, facilitate the women to further develop their social capital.

There is a preference towards the ethnic contact on individual level and almost a rejection of collective level interaction with co-ethnics. Two facts could explain this individualistic way of establishing social contacts and forming networks not based on ethnicity. There seems to be an overall lack of unity in the group as a whole. Measuring the women by the background information the women represent middle-class but lack other common denominator to form a unity, 'being Russian is not enough'. The other explanation could lie in the strong stereotype of Russian woman prevailing in Finland. Moving to a new

73

country means finding a new reference group, naturally one's ethnic group can provide such a thing.

The women practised selectivity in choosing this reference group in Finland because they wanted to resist the strong stereotyping about Russian women. This was evident in the way the women expressed their wish to be in control of their lives, including choosing your friends.

6.1.2 Economic sphere

Also this study indicates that participating in the economic life is of paramount importance in a resettling context. Work means interdependence with the society, it provides a useful function to an individual and in addition is a source of satisfaction in life. The main motive to work is associated with a respected and appreciated status in the society.

One could also conclude that integration of the Russian women into the labour market in a structural way has taken place, but only partly. Entry to the labour market means occupational downgrading, at least the first job is not at par with the qualifications and capacity of an immigrant but this parity tends to improve slightly over time. Government services were utilised to some extend to gain orientation and language training but do not play a significant role in finding employment which is found through own contacts. One could also argue that structural integration has succeeded only partly because all the (first) jobs found were in a special field of economy; Russian language and/or culture.

6.1.3 Obstacles

Resettlement can be seen to represent a continuing endeavour to attain full membership in the society. Admission does not automatically guarantee the ability to exercise comprehensively the rights and duties of citizenship. This often depends on resettler's capacity for negotiating (and removing) barriers.

74

The obstacles to participation in Finland do not occur in principle at an institutional level. Once you have obtained official admission to Finland the rights to welfare and income support are universal to all residents in the country. The obstacles can be found at prevailing negative attitudes towards foreigners and particularly towards the Russians who are amongst the most unpopular group of foreigners in Finland (Jaakkola 1999). This overall negative attitude leads to the issue of not being socially accepted. One of the characteristics of a plural society is reciprocal flexibility and adjustment from both sides, majority and minority (Pitkänen&Kouki 1999, 58). The majority is also required to tolerate differences and exercise the capacity to change. In the new law on integration of immigrants it has also been recorded that while integration is a long time process and requires active approach and adjustment not only from the immigrants but also from the majority (Law on Integration of Immigrants, May 1999). While the immigrants are expected to participate in the different spheres of the society, they are also entitled to feel socially accepted. This study, confirms that Finns are not ready to accept cultural diversity, as represented by Russians, in Finland.

6.2 Human, social and cultural capital

Immigrants, when resettling in a new country, are in a situation, where previously acquired skills and knowledge diminish rapidly and need to be reformed. This capital, human capital, however, forms a base for a new capital building which will enable them to participate in the economic, social and political fields of a society of resettlement. The employment experience and educational qualifications as well as language skills and other merits form parts of human capital. The Russian women entered Finland with considerable human capital including some Finnish language skills.

Social capital can be seen to refer to the citizens' capacity to deploy and utilise, to their benefit, acquired human capital. This is a skill to orientate in the societal structure and network of contacts both formal and informal. There are features of development and

utilisation of social contact networks that indicate that the women have developed social capital and managed to utilise their human capital to their advantage. One of these specific features is the situation when confronting authorities in a dispute related incident. One can argue that the knowledge about citizenship, by knowing the rights and defending them, is extensive. It requires certain kind of social capital, or bureaucratic capital to take on efforts to question authorities. There is an indication that social capital was developed in form of utilising social network in getting a job, particularly the first job. Similarly, attending the adjustment courses or language course requires certain level of societal capital to know how the society works. Expanding the social network widely across the society even in form of 'weak ties' seemed to have increased women's capacity to deal with issues on their own, to increase into a new level of social capital, *bureaucratic capital*. This capital became useful when confronting authorities in disputes and overcoming these disputes.

Development of cultural capital refers to reflect aspects of acquiring new culture which assist in coping and problem solving, as well as those related to values and quality of life. It is not possible within the framework of this study to explore the extend of retained values of the original culture and extend of adapted values of the new culture. This study, however, indicates that the process of cultural changes is going on within the interviewees. Evidently certain aspects of the Finnish culture have become theirs, and it assists in coping with different situations in life, and in problem solving. This study also indicates that the Russian culture is appreciated and valued and maintained. Part of this cultural capital, particularly in form of Russian language, is also transferred to children, although the speed of cultural change with them is worrying the women. Work has played a role in developing work related cultural capital and this has influenced women to maintain their place in the labour market.

Looking at the research findings from the acculturation perspective and interpreting it by Berry's model, the women have adopted an acculturation strategy that in their overall life

resembles that of integration and in their working life has an inclination towards assimilation.

6.2.1 Women on a personal campaign

The persistently prevailing stereotypes about Russians in Finland indicate that the society has not reached a state of multi-culturalism. In a multi-cultural society immigrants are expected to participate in different fields of society. Yet, it is also expected that the receiving society is accommodating the immigrants as well. Finland practices egalitarian policy by granting equal rights to all residents of the country. The accommodation of representatives of other cultures and nations is not equally egalitarian beyond the official level. The women appear to be in a personal campaign against the stereotypes. Bourdieu (1998, 16-17) is talking about people who are 'in wrong positions in the society' as judged by the amount of social and cultural capital they possess, are the ones who will modify the rules of the society. The immigrants who enter the country with considerable amount of human capital are a resource that any society cannot afford to ignore. In efforts of making Finland a multi-cultural and tolerant society beyond the official policy statement level, immigrants like the women in the study are playing an important role in this endeavour on personal level. The immigrants with developed social and cultural capital are assets to the society, and they should be treated as such.

6.2.2 Proposing a mediator

This research has given an insight into the integration process as the Russian immigrant working women experience it. It looks as if there are some observable parameters in a system that promotes their integration into Finnish society. The importance of work is significant in their lives, as is the positive attitude towards work, *'any work, as long as it is work, even voluntary work'* as one interviewee said. It once more confirms that work is a corner stone of integration and work provides a forum for wider development of social contacts. Social contacts have come up as a significant role in supporting the immigrant

77

women in their efforts to gain access to Finnish labour markets. It certainly is a challenge for the newcomers who come without Finnish family members to start developing those contacts. It is also a challenge for voluntary and official supporting networks to act as mediators in this central task of integration.

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APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Personal Data
a. age and place of birth
b. education
c. civil status
d. children
e. language skills; Finnish language, acquired where and when; other languages

Work
a. jobs in Russia and Finland
b. how were they found?
c. typical working day
d. economic dependency

Networks
a. friends   - how often do you meet?
b. relatives -where do they live?
c. acuantainces -how often do you meet?
d. contacts with neighbours
e. membership in associations; why? why not?

Culture
a. preservation of own culture, values, practices in family and community
b. children and their retention of Russian culture

Goals and priorities
a. career goals
b. future in general

Problems
a. racism
b. at work, individual level

Anything else