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Being Bicultural:

Identity and Belonging among 1.5G and 2G Russian Immigrants in Finland

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**UNIVERSITY OF VAASA****Faculty of Philosophy****Programme:** ICS**Author:** Tatiana Iovich**Master's Thesis:** Being Bicultural:  
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**ABSTRACT**

Due to immigration and international mobility, the phenomenon of biculturalism is no longer a novelty. There is an extensive amount of research dedicated to the identity of the first generation immigrants particularly in countries with old traditions of immigration. Finland is considered a relatively new immigrant country. This study aims to examine perceptions of identity of adult children of Russian immigrants in Finland. Some of them are second generation immigrants (2G), while others moved to Finland at an early age and can be referred to as one and a half generation immigrants (1.5G). Besides, Finland and Russia create a specific context for the analysis due to the fact that these are neighboring countries with a long and not always amiable history that has affected their relations.

A qualitative approach is employed in the current work. A theoretical part comprises identity-related theories with the focus on biculturalism within immigration setting. A combination of holistic narrative and thematic methods was used for analysing the data which was collected through nine semi-structured interviews with adult children of Russian immigrants.

The findings uncover individuals' diversified experiences of growing up in two cultures as well as different understandings of being bicultural. Most of the individuals acknowledge their dual identity and consider themselves bicultural. Moreover, they appreciate being a part of both cultures and find it beneficial. However, while some of the interviewees demonstrate their orientation towards one culture, others position themselves between and/or neglect a necessity to tie themselves to either of these cultures. In the latter case, they use the concept of European and multicultural identity.

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**KEYWORDS:** identity, bicultural identity, Russian immigrants, immigration, one and a half generation, second generation, Finland





## 1 INTRODUCTION

Russians comprise the second largest minority in Finland after the Swedish speaking population (Statistics Finland, Population Structure 2012). A neighboring position coupled with a complicated history of Russia and Finland has affected the relations and attitudes of Finns towards Russian immigrants in Finland. This attitude towards the Russian speaking minority is often characterized as negative and prejudiced (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000: 5). Therefore, it raises the question if children of Russian immigrants are affected by this fact, what they tell about it and how they identify and position themselves. Thus, the subjects of the current work are adult children of Russian immigrants and their narratives on their identity and belonging.

### 1.1 Background

Identity and immigration constitute the main concepts of the current work. Being an abstract and vague construct, there is no unique definition of identity and the concept is addressed by many scholars in social sciences, cultural, political and other fields of studies. It embraces the opposing concepts of the individual and the collective, sameness and differentiation. The very term “identity” is often perceived as a synonym of self, personality, identification, belonging and attachment, which represents two main views on identity: individual and collective. This study adopts a concept of identity which connects the individual self with the outside world. Along with a unique and individual nature, identities are constructed based on relations and attitudes towards the groups and communities a person is affiliated with (Barker 2004: 94).

Identity becomes more salient in an unfamiliar environment and with dual belongings, so in the case of bicultural individuals. There is a significant amount of research devoted to identity in the context of immigration, as well as on biculturals (for example, Berry 2001;

Benet-Martinez & Haritatos 2005, LaFromboise 2010; Phinney & Devich-Navarro 1997). This will comprise the theoretical basis of the current study. Unlike many other works, this research explores one and a half (1.5G) and second generation (2G) Russian immigrants. The term 1.5G is used here to describe children of immigrant(s) who came to the host country as children under 10 years old (Ellis & Goodwin-White 2006: 901). The interviewees of the current research came to Finland from the age of three to nine years old. Second generation immigrants were born in Finland. The immigrants of this study are a so called invisible minority in the sense that they might not be recognized and defined as immigrants or minority by a larger population. They speak native Finnish and cannot be visually distinguished from the host society.

Motivations for this research have been the growth of international mobility and immigration as well as the emergence of one and a half and second generation of immigrants in the countries which before were known as emigration states. The 1.5G immigrants have not largely been addressed, however they comprise a significant amount of immigrant population. Moreover, the specific Russian-Finnish context has enhanced the interest for conducting this qualitative study.

## 1.2 Objective of the Study and Research Questions

The objective of the current work is to explore perceptions of the identity of adult children of Russian immigrants in relation to two cultures. This study intends to answer the following research questions:

Q1: What experiences did the adult children of Russian immigrants have when growing up and how do they describe it?

Q 2: Do adult children of Russian immigrants consider themselves bicultural and if so, what do they understand by being bicultural and where do they position themselves?

Q3: Do they find being bicultural challenging and what are their attitudes about their belonging?

### 1.3 Material and Methodology

A combination of a holistic narrative approach and a thematic analysis is applied in the current study. First, each interview is described separately and interpreted using the recommendations and techniques presented in the work of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber (1998). Then, a thematic analysis is conducted based on delineated themes across the interviews (Riessman 2008). The main focus of this analysis lies on the content; however, the structure is not neglected and also taken into account. The data is collected through nine semi-structured interviews which are transcribed and analysed. The interviews with these nine participants were conducted in Russian using Skype. Four interviews had follow-up sessions. The description of the used methods is presented more thoroughly in the chapter following the theoretical framework.

### 1.4 Organisation of this Study

This research has six main chapters. After the introduction, which represents a brief overview of the current research, the theoretical part is introduced. It describes the main theories on identity and biculturalism. These main concepts give a platform for further data analysis. The third part, Immigration in Finland, is important and provides a perspective and a context within which the bicultural identity of the individuals is analysed. The next chapter is dedicated to methodology and describes the methods applied in the current study, the procedure and participants. The fifth part presents the analysis of the collected data and correlates findings with theoretical concepts. Conclusions together with limitations and suggestions finalize this study.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POSITIONS ON IDENTITY

The concept of identity has been addressed in numerous studies; therefore, it has been largely theorised. This work does not embark to cover all views on identity across various fields. However, this theoretical framework describes main approaches and provides an important basis for analysing identity in multicultural and migration settings.

Due to multiple approaches, theories and orientations, it is important to establish the perspective and position this research supports. I share the assumption on identity reflected in the influential work by Erik Erikson (1980). He describes identity as the concept that lies in consistency within oneself and in sharing common nature with others thus group identity and ego merge together in one's identity development. Erikson positions identity inside the individuals and their culture. Noteworthy, he indicates that the formation of identity is a lifelong process, therefore introducing a dynamic aspect of this concept (Erikson 1980: 109–122). This chapter covers various approaches to identity, development of multicultural person and variations in bicultural individuals.

### 2.1 Essentialist vs. Non-essentialist Positions

Identity has been approached from essentialist and non-essentialist or constructivist perspectives. According to the first, there is a set of inner characteristics or values which do not alter with time and comprise the unique nature of a group or an individual. Thus, such understanding of identity implies stable meanings, categories and eternal qualities which comprise one's identity (Barker 2004: 61–62).

In contrast to essentialism, a non-essentialist view outlines a dynamic character of identity which is affected by time, context and situation. It emphasises its socially constructed nature. Thus, identities and any cultural product undergo modifications and are affected by

circumstances and specific time; they are constructed on similarity and differences (Robins 2005: 173; Barker 2004: 7, 94). According to Stuart Hall (1996: 1–18), who interprets identity from a non-essentialist approach, identities undergo changes and transformations. It is a process of “becoming” rather than “being” and it reflects both future and the past. Hall also argues that identity is constructed through exclusion, in relation to the other and it represents a temporary point of attachment.

This study supports a non-essentialist view on identity. However it does not mean that identities are in constant flux. As Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 1) state, this inaccurate assumption leads to the understanding of identity as something ambiguous which disables the discussion about identity.

## 2.2 Interrelations between Individual and Collective Perspectives on Identity

Early works treated identity as an internal project of self which implied the notion of the unique nature of individuals, agency and the ability to reflect and control the mind, for example in the works of such philosophers as Freud and Lacan. However, along with the focus on the individual, the importance of the social context has also been acknowledged across theories (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 17–24).

The twentieth century can be characterized as putting more emphasis on collective identity. Collective identity is understood through person’s identification with a group and it comprises features and characteristics of that group. Social identity is often regarded as a form of collective identity. The main and one of the most influential theories on group identity is the Social Identity Theory (SIT) developed by Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel & Turner 1986; Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 25).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains the notion of identity from an in-group and an out-group perspective, where the former refers to the group an individual belongs to, the latter to an outside group, members of which are perceived as others. Analysing intergroup conflict SIT authors Tajfel and Turner (1986: 13) come to the conclusion that in-group identification was given little attention which is nevertheless essential for studying intergroup conflict as such.

Talking about social groups, Tajfel and Turner (1986: 15) point out that identification comes from both defining yourself and being defined as a member of a specific group where emotional attachment about such membership is observed. Collective awareness and a sense of belonging are important criteria in social identification (Turner 1987: 19). Social categorisation enables individuals to find their social roles and position based on the comparison with the members of in-group and out-group. Such comparison determines a positive or a negative identity which is affected by feelings about the group and membership in it. If a certain group faces prejudices or discrimination, a person might obtain a negative identity which can lead to either a suspension of belonging in the group or joining another group on psychological or practical levels (Turner 1987: 30). Social status is naturally associated with evaluation and comparison with other groups. In-group bias affects intergroup relations and might engage discrimination towards another group. Social categorization also triggers stereotyping and prejudice (Tajfel & Turner 1986: 13). Moreover, not only hetero-stereotypes take place which are oriented towards out-groups. Auto-stereotyping occurs because through identifying themselves as a member of a group or social category, individuals adopt and assign norms and characteristics that define a group they belong to (Turner 1982).

Social Identification Theory was criticised for making group level identification essential for a positive self-concept and thus neglecting individual distinctiveness from other in-group members. Individuals are different even within one membership group. Moreover, as people can belong to various groups, they make sense of their identity based on their

multiple alliances (Liebkind 1984: 50–51). Therefore, the interaction between individual and social elements shapes person's identity. This understanding of identity is employed in the current work.

### 2.3 Defining Cultural, Ethnic and National Identities

The terms of “cultural”, “ethnic” and “national” identities are often used interchangeably. However, the current study employs the term of cultural identity which is understood here as a broader term including both ethnic and national identity (Sabatier 2008: 187). A similar understanding of the concept of cultural identity is formulated by Kim (2007: 238):

Cultural identity is employed broadly to include related concepts as subcultural, national, ethnolinguistic, and racial identity. Cultural identity also designates both sociological or demographic classification, as well as an individual's psychological identification with a particular group. Both sociological and psychological meaning of cultural identity is regarded as two inseparable correlates of the same phenomenon.

What then include the concepts of ethnic and national identity? According to Smith (1991:11), national identity is not only shaped by a nations' border definition but also by cultural, economic, political components. The meaning of ethnic identity lies on the term “ethnicity”, the definition of which largely varies. It includes racial, linguistic, cultural and religious criteria and social, cognitive and emotional aspects (Liebkind 1984: 23–24). In majority-minority relations, ethnic and national identities are often used in opposing meanings. However, individuals also may perceive a strong sense of both identities and thus demonstrate their compatible nature (Sabatier 2008: 187).

As it has been stated in the beginning, the concept of cultural identity is employed in the current work due to its broad meaning. Therefore, more deliberation on understanding the concept is provided below.

To start with, what is culture? As it is a multifaceted and a complex term, it is important to clarify its definition. The Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture (Bolaffi, Bracalenti, Braham & Gindro 2003: 61) defines it as “shared customs, values and beliefs which characterize a given social group, and which are passed down from generation to generation”. According to Barker (2004: 44–45), culture is associated with a general way of life and meanings shared within a certain society. Thus, as culture often refers to society and community, hence, the concept of cultural identity is very often employed in a collective sense. From a collective or social perspective, cultural identity comprises the characteristics of a specific group that shares the same culture. Cultural identity in this sense comprises beliefs, values, traditions and recurrent activities of everyday life.

Nevertheless, cultural identity can also be observed from an individual perspective when the nucleus is an individual who interacts with and within the culture. Thus, personality and culture are intertwined and cultural identity reflects the meaning one gives to the experience of attitudes, perceptions, values, philosophy of the certain cultural group or groups (Adler 1998: 229–230). For Adler (1998: 230–234), cultural identity represents the system of images and perceptions that are defined by culture and together with an image of self, constitutes a person’s cultural psychological content. Culture systematises and organises person’s nature especially in early years when the character is formed which is necessary for individual’s social life by giving him or her possible directions and guidelines.

Petkova (2005: 19–23) distinguishes collective and individual types of cultural identity. When cultural identity is described on the group level, the definition is based on belonging to cultural communities. According to her, the individualistic approach is more complex and built on allegiances one has. Thus, cultural identities of people of the same nationality might differ.



Interpreting cultural identity on a collective level, Petkova (2005: 19–23) delineates three main components that comprise the notion of cultural identity: material, spiritual and spacio-temporal. Elements of material culture include clothes, food, artifacts. Values, traditions, behavior, manners represent the spiritual or mental dimension of identity. The third component, spacio-temporal, explains how time and space are perceived in a culture. Thus cultural identity can have a stable character regarding values and traditions, but it also become dynamic nature when the understanding of such notions as space and time alter with the emergence of new technologies.

According to Myron Lustig and Jolene Koester (1998: 136–142), cultural identity is an interaction between the individual and the cultural group he or she belongs to. They outline three stages in one's cultural identity development: unexamined cultural identity, search for cultural identity and cultural identity achievement. The first stage is characterised by the lack of interest and awareness of cultural allegiance. It is observed among children and adolescents when they accept existing stereotypes and perceptions about culture as well as their belonging without analyses. During a period of search, individuals explore, investigate and have a strong wish to know about their roots and ancestry. This stage might cause emotional reactions over sensitive issues. In the third and conclusive stage of cultural identity achievement, individual's identity is shaped and embraces awareness and acceptance of the own culture and a person feels comfortable with stereotypes and possible negative perceptions and attitudes (Lustig & Koester 1998: 136–142).

The comprehension of an own cultural identity might also undergo changes due to its dynamic nature. It is associated with continuous events in life, encounters, experiences and cultural contacts (Lustig & Koester 1998: 142–144).

## 2.4 Identity in Inter- and Multicultural Setting

Sussman (2000: 355–373) states that cultural identity can remain unperceived and unobserved within a familiar setting and people might not be aware of their cultural identity. However, it becomes especially relevant in intercultural or multicultural contexts as well as in minority groups.

### 2.4.1 Towards a Multicultural Society

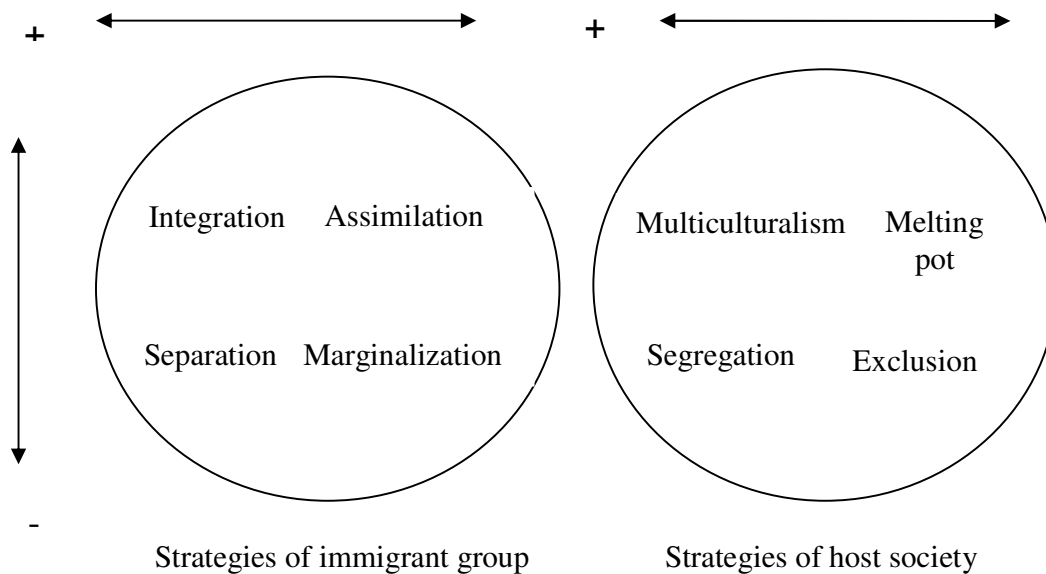
Almost any society in the world is multicultural. Finland is a country with various ethnic groups. Through recent immigration, multiculturalism has gained a new dimension. In its immigration policy the Finnish government pursues integration (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers 1999) where cultural diversity and multiculturalism is supported (Berry 2001: 620).

On the one hand, multiculturalism is a demographic feature that reflects the multiethnic characteristic of a society. On the other hand, it is the governmental policy towards cultural diversity that includes immigrants' engagement, their economic and social well-being, equal rights and antidiscrimination (Van de Vijver, Breugelmans & Shalk –Soekar 2008: 95–104).

Bourhis, Moise, Perreault and Senecal (1997: 369–386) present ideologies or policies the states can adopt towards immigrants: pluralism, civic, assimilation and ethnist ideologies. Pluralism promotes an adoption of the public values of the host society by immigrants as well as respect to private values of immigrants by host society. The state in this case provides the support for activities of immigrants to maintain their cultural heritage. This ideology emphasises the value of cultural diversity which is the basis for multiculturalism. The second ideology is civic which supports the two first principles of pluralism ideology, yet it denies the responsibility of the state to provide financial means for private activities

of immigrants. Thus, less attention is given to ethnocultural groups and the maintenance of their cultural background. The main feature of the third, assimilation ideology constitutes in focusing on values of mainstream culture and abdicating traditions and activities associated with immigrants' background. It might happen either on a voluntary basis or by establishing laws and regulations which limit the possibility of cultural expressiveness. The last type in the current classification is an ethnist ideology that can be presented in two ways. In the first case, immigrants are to accept and adopt values of the dominant group while neglecting their own cultural distinctiveness. The second variant of implementation of this ideology does not recognize immigrants as rightful and legitimate members of the host society and does not expect them to assimilate. Here, the approach of blood citizenship takes place when the position and status of citizen is determined by racial criteria.

James Berry describes similar strategies but from an immigrants' perspective and introduces the concept of acculturation (2001: 616). Acculturation can be understood as the process of adaptation and acquisition of a new culture (Bolaffi et al. 2003: 1). Berry (2001: 616) emphasizes an aspect of a mutual change in the process of acculturation because it involves two or more parties with an outcome for all. Both immigrants and host society can have different views on acculturation. In the figure below, Berry demonstrates the strategies and acculturation attitudes both parts of society might have. Plus and minus in this table indicate positive or negative orientations in the attitudes:



**Figure 1.** Acculturation attitudes in immigration groups and in the receiving society  
Source: Adopted from Berry (2001: 618)

The individuals can have a different degree of motivation to preserve the cultural heritage and adapt to the culture of the host society. Thus, according to Berry (2001: 619), there are four strategies: assimilation, separation, marginalization and integration. Assimilation happens when individuals are not concerned about retaining their cultural background, but, in contrast, they are more eager to communicate and interact with representatives of the host society. When individuals abstain from mainstream culture and demonstrate allegiance only to the original culture, separation strategy takes place. Marginalization is defined when neither original nor mainstream cultures are of individual's interest. Finally, integration strategy, which is pursued by multicultural policy, reflects the desire of an individual to adopt values of a new culture along with preserving the home cultural heritage. For an integration strategy to be implemented and thus for the existence of multicultural society, certain conditions are required, as a low level of prejudices, positive attitudes among groups and a sense of belonging to mainstream culture (Berry, 2001: 615–631). Each of

these immigrants' strategies corresponds to the views from a larger society reflected in the right part of this figure.

Immigrant acculturation can be observed as unidimensional and bidimensional processes. A unidimensional assimilation model represents the passing process from the maintenance of immigrant's cultural background to adoption of the dominant culture. Biculturalism occurs between these extreme points and refers to the temporary stage when immigrants keep their cultural distinctiveness while adopting the culture of the host society (Bourhis et al. 1997: 375). A bidimensional model of acculturation described by Berry (2001: 629) is based on preserving the own cultural heritage along with the engagement with another culture which constitute two aspects of cultural identity. These two aspects are ethnic and national identity which can positively correlate. This implies an integration strategy and a multicultural ideology:

[...] these dimensions are usually independent of each other (in the sense that they are not negatively correlated or that more of one does not imply less of other), and they are nested (in the sense that one's heritage identity may be contained within a larger national identity; for example, one can be an Italian Australian) (Berry 2001: 621).

#### 2.4.2 Identity in Intercultural Encounters

In inter- and multicultural setting, an intercultural conflict might take place due to discrepancies of norms, values or the ways of interaction. In this context, identity can be either enhanced or threatened. Stella Ting-Toomey (2010: 21–40) analysing intercultural conflict, emphasises the significance of identity which is seen as a set of self-images that an individual constructs and experiences in a certain cultural context in situations involving interaction.

In the integrated threat theory described by Stephan & Stephan (2000: 38), the conditions that stimulate threats are conflict history, ignorance or knowledge gaps, contact and status.

A past conflict history is a source for prejudices that causes the emergence of new conflicts and negative attitudes towards another group. An intergroup knowledge gap or ignorance shows that members of the groups possess little knowledge about each other which is also accompanied by stereotypes. However, a personalised positive contact contributes to the creation of a favorable image regardless of the stereotypes and prejudices a group might have.

In the face negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi 1998: 187–225) the main notion is face which is the way that one wants to be seen by others. As Goffman (2005: 5) states, face is a self-image that a person creates and others might share. This social self-image can be enhanced or threatened in social interaction. An individual can direct and control social dignity through specific communicative strategies which is called facework; it involves verbal and non-verbal elements. Being a social construct, face nevertheless is connected with personal self, but the degree of this connection differs due to the individualist and collectivist models of society. In conflict situations, face affects the individual and the individual tends to protect the own self-interests. Distinct conflict habits can be particularly observed in intercultural encounters and might imply identity-related issues (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi 1998: 187–225).

Face negotiation theory states that regardless the culture and communication situations, people try to maintain their face which becomes a sensitive issue when identity threat takes place. Individualism–collectivism and power distance as well as other individual, situational and relational factors affect facework behaviour, interpersonal interaction and communication (Ting-Toomey 2010: 21–40; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi 1998: 187–225).

Another theory on intercultural conflict presents a cross-cultural code switching model (Molinsky 2007: 622–640). This theory suggests that behavior should be modified according to the cultural context and the norms appropriate for a culture of interaction. Code switchers in these situations have to demonstrate a coherent behaviour so that it

would seem appropriate for insiders. This identity challenge is especially complex when the cultural values contrast. Thus, learning is required for cross-cultural code-switching (Molinsky 2007: 625).

### 2.4.3 Multicultural Identity

In a multicultural society, a person can have multiple allegiances and therefore hold a multicultural identity. What makes a person multicultural and what comprises such a concept?

Peter Adler (1998: 225–245) calls an individual affected by different cultures a new kind of a person. He states that there are three features that define a multicultural identity: psychocultural adaptation, personal transitions and indefinite nature. First, psychocultural adaptation is observed in the interaction with other people where one's behaviour is determined by the situation and context. Individuals in this case consider values or views only on the basis of such contexts. Personal transitions imply constant development due to cultural learning and unlearning. The core process of such changes is experience and openness towards the world. The third characteristic indicates that identity is not static but always dynamic. A multicultural person has a capability to observe and analyse the culture from a stranger's perspective. Cultural sensitivity does not make a person multicultural; what matters is the capability to be flexible within a certain cultural context, to be open for changes and new identity (Adler 1998: 225–245).

Adler also points out that a dynamic nature of the individual's identity provides a unique experience but at the same time might cause tensions and stresses. A multicultural person is prone to be confused in defining what is relevant which makes him or her vulnerable. The multicultural person is also exposed to become multiphrenic and demonstrates difficulties to give the meaning to messages and experiences (Adler 1998: 245).

Adler's ideas are subjected to scrutiny and criticism in Lise Sparrow's article "Beyond Multicultural Man: Complexities of Identity" (2008: 239–263). Analysing her students' essays and conducting interviews, Sparrow examines different attitudes and assumptions of Adler's definition of a multicultural person and finds it biased. First, Adler's work covers only men's experiences. Second, the whole concept of individual identity is Euro-centric and many of her international students, women and people of colour either deny this construct as such or claim that one's identity derives from the group and develops under collective influence. Self-consciousness and awareness, free choice that, according to Adler, determines a multicultural person, at times cannot be found in suppressed and minority societies. Identity shifting happens on an intuitive basis and is stipulated by outside contexts and sometimes by forced conditions. In the conclusion Sparrow highlights the importance of good relationships between the host society and the society of origin culture for developing empathy and interpersonal skills. Although the ideas of Adler's article have been revised and found biased, Sparrow nevertheless points out that Adler's view is correct from the western men's perspective which was also reflected in some male students' essays and interviews.

#### 2.4.4 European Identity

Since 1995 Finland has been one of the EU members. There has also been a long dispute on Russia's positioning between West and East and belonging to Europe. For these reasons, new forms of identity come up; hence, it is important to introduce the concept of the European identity in this study.

The Treaty on European Union (1992, 2012) introduces the main principles, objectives and provisions of the European Union. The concept of the European identity appears in the preamble of the treaty and the need of its reinforcement while respecting national identities, the cultural and linguistic diversity of each member of the European Community is emphasised. "Cultural, religious and humanistic inheritance of Europe" (The Treaty on



European Union 2012: 15) has given rise for the establishment of the European Union and European integration.

The Eurobarometer surveys show what the European Union means for EU citizens. The items which got the highest score to represent the European Union (Eb 70 2008) are freedom to travel, study and work anywhere (44%), Euro (34%), piece (27%), stronger say in the world (23%) and democracy (21%). Results vary with age, education of respondents as well as among EU countries. Interestingly, the two first items are the highest in Finland in comparison with other Member States. An earlier study (Eb 62 2004) on European identity includes European citizenship and a degree of attachment. Regarding European citizenship, 37% consider themselves only citizens of their own country, 48 % firstly position their own nationality and then European. 3% defined themselves only as European. European attachment demonstrates an unstable character in the survey and is characterized by the least emotional involvement in comparison with national, regional and local ones (Antonsich 2008: 694, 706).

Bruter (2003a: 1154) finds these Eb surveys rather problematic because of their opposing and future oriented questions such as “Do you feel British only, British and European, European and British or European only” and “How do you see yourself in the future?” Concentrating on smaller samples (France, UK, Netherlands), the study conducted by Bruter (2003) tries to understand what people mean by saying that they feel European or not. This study is also different due to its qualitative nature and a focus group discussion method. The important question that was raised by Bruter is what one personally understands by identity as such. Referring to his previous studies, Bruter confirms “non-negligible levels” (Bruter 2003b: 3) of European identity across counties which is comprised of civic and cultural aspects. What do these components signify? The cultural component implies an individual’s connection to a certain group through common culture, traditions, history, values, etc.; while the civic level of identity focuses on citizens’ political identification in regards to the structure, rights, institutions within the European community

(Bruter 2003b: 11). Thus the goal of Bruter's study was to analyse which of the components the European citizens mainly perceive as European. The findings indicate a predominance of the civic component which is characterized by free movement, democracy and policy making aspects. A smaller group of respondents perceive European identity from the cultural perspective which includes such identifiers as peace, harmony and cooperation.

#### 2.4.5 Biculturalism and Identity

If multicultural identity refers to holding multiple allegiances and identities, then the term "bicultural identity" implies only two. Adler's and Sparrow's understanding of the multicultural person have been approached from the perspective of free choice and self-formation through the adoption and integration of new cultures. However, biculturalism is often employed within an acculturation and immigration context.

According to LaFromboise (2010: 143), biculturalism reflects one's possession and application of behavior and values of two cultures. Therefore, a bicultural person holds a dual identity. Bicultural individuals internalise two cultural orientations and identify themselves with them. It is important to differentiate between cultural knowledge and cultural identification. One might know about traditions, values and even apply a corresponding cultural behavior within a particular setting, but does not identify with the culture (Brannen & Thomas 2010: 6).

LaFromboise (2010: 144–145) describes four ways of becoming bicultural. The first one refers to individuals who are born with two heritages from parents with different cultural backgrounds. Three other ways are associated with immigration and correspondently cover first generation, one-and-a-half and second generation immigrants.

One-and-a-half generation (1.5G) immigrants are those who moved to the host country as children and pre-adolescents. They learn the parents' language, values, traditions and beliefs; meanwhile they naturally adopt those of a host country. Thus they develop dual roles and dual competences. The similar situation is with the second generation immigrants who were born in the host country. Third or fourth generation immigrants also can become bicultural depending on their allegiances and interest in their roots. An important aspect characterising bicultural individuals is their bicultural competence which includes a sense of belonging to both cultures combined with a positive feeling and equal value of such, dual modes of conduct and an ability to use them appropriately according to the social and cultural context and situation (LaFromboise 2010: 144).

Feeling included in a larger society is a crucial factor for being bicultural and biculturalism of different ethnic and cultural groups might differ due to a distinct history and to relations between groups. Therefore, a positive and tolerant perception from the host society affects how individuals feel about being bicultural (Phinney & Devich-Navarro 1997: 7, 26–27). According to an intersectionality approach, many other factors stipulate differences in bicultural individuals and should be taken into account such as age, gender, ethnicity, the amount of years spent in a new culture, social economic status, education, etc. (Phoenix & Pattynane 2006: 189; Benet Martinez and Haritatos 2005: 1019).

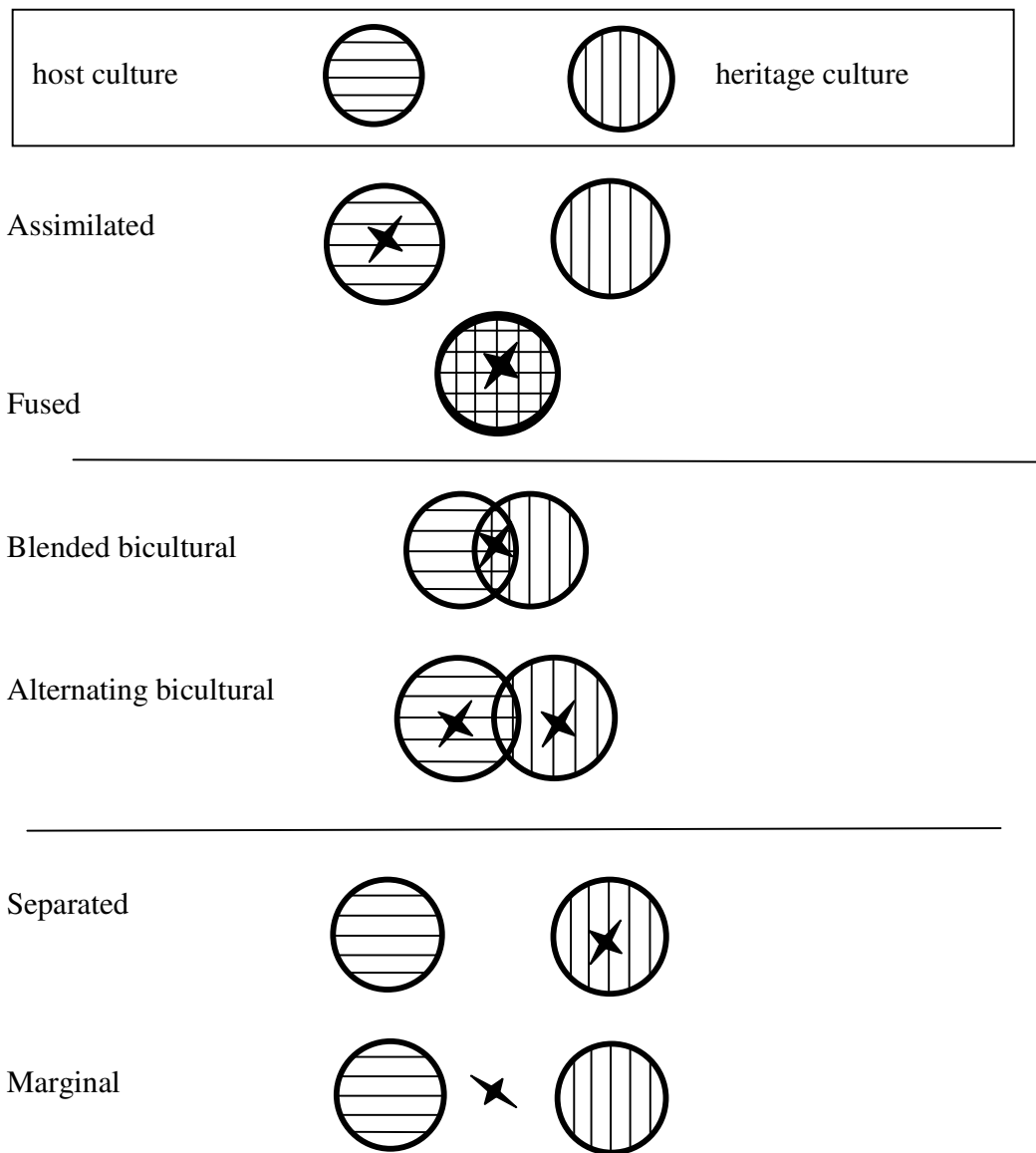
According to a non-essentialist approach, identity is a dynamic process and the formation and development starts from an early age. Referring to numerous studies in the United States and Britain, Smith and Schneider (2000: 248) assume that cross-ethnic and racial friendships are defined as less intimate and shorter than those of the same ethnic group. However, a similar study conducted by the authors in Canada has not confirmed these findings. Moreover, facing discrimination during childhood can lead to different outcomes, when in some cases ethnic identity is enhanced, whereas in others, its rejection is observed. Finally, relationships in the family and parental acculturation attitudes also play an important role in individual's identity formation (Sabatier 2008: 188–189).

Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005: 1017) state that biculturalism is described both from negative and positive sides. Along with feelings of pride, uniqueness, an individual might experience identity confusion and conflicts of values. Pressure and stereotypes from different communities can complicate the sense of dual affiliation.

Another question is how these individuals negotiate between dual identities. According to research conducted on Chinese American biculturals (Hong, Chiu & Benet-Martínez 2000), such individuals undergo the process of cultural frame switching due to their possession of cultural meanings and cues of two frames. However, bicultural individuals differ and such variations are explained through Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos (2005: 1017). According to this theoretical construct, high BII biculturals see their identities compatible and can successfully function in both cultures. They describe themselves as members of a “hyphenated”, a combined or a third culture. Those who are low on BII face problems integrating a dual cultural heritage and explain it by contrasting and opposing natures of these cultures. They perceive the tension and believe that they should choose one culture. High and low BII individuals differ in behavioral patterns when being exposed to external cues where the former demonstrate a congruent conduct, while the latter could find difficulties to apply a culturally adequate behavior (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos 2005: 1020).

Bicultural Identity Integration later was also complemented by the perception of cultural distance and conflict which affect the BII index. The notion of cultural conflict implies the idea of being caught between two cultures, dealing with prejudices and rejection from the members of communities. When two cultures are perceived as too different and alienated, the notion of distance is employed (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos 2005: 1038–1041). The importance of personal traits when analysing the differences in bicultural persons is also important. Therefore, the reserved nature of the individual, for example, might lead to separating identities and the implementation of the separation strategy (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos 2005: 1036).

Phinney & Devich-Navarro (1997) also describe variations across bicultural individuals and find the very experience of dual belonging complex and multifaceted. Following Berry's acculturation model, they focus on integration strategies and integrated individuals who identify with both cultures and can be called bicultural. To portray the relations between individuals and different communities, Phinney & Devich-Navarro (1997: 5) identify six patterns which are presented in the figure below, where the circles are majority and minority cultures, and the "✕" indicates the position of the individual in relation with these cultures:



**Figure 2.** Identification patterns based on the individual's perception of cultures  
Source: Adopted from Phinney & Devich-Navarro (1997: 5)

According to Phinney & Devich-Navarro, bicultural individuals occupy only the middle part of this figure, and assimilated, fused, separated and marginal individuals cannot be called

biculturals. In assimilation, a person identifies only with the host culture rejecting his or her original one. Fusion represents overlapping cultures when they are no longer distinguished. Within a separation pattern, an individual chooses only being part of the heritage culture group, whereas a marginal person rejects both. Therefore, only blended and alternating individuals are recognized as biculturals. Blended biculturals hold both identities which results in a combination of these and formation of a new identity. Blended bicultural individuals have good feelings about both cultures and are proud of their background. They do not experience an acute conflict between the cultures, thus having a dual identity does not seem an issue for them. Alternating bicultural individuals on the other hand have a strong attachment with their heritage culture. They enjoy being part of this culture and feel more united and incorporated with the members of such. They are aware of a possible conflict and change their behaviour according to the cultural context (Phinney & Devich-Navarro 1997: 4–7).

Based on numerous theories and patterns of understanding bicultural individuals Roccas and Brewer (2002: 92–93) provide an alternative version of looking at such individuals. In a hyphenated form identities are intersecting. In previously described research, it is named as a blended identity. In the second mode one identity dominates over another one. This reflects either assimilation or separation strategies (Berry 2001; Phinney & Devich Navarro 1997). The third mode is compartmentalisation. It refers to a conscious activation of different cultural identities within a specific situation. The awareness of a possible conflict is observed by such individuals. The fourth form is called integrated biculturalism or intercultural identity. This form of identity differs from both compartmentalization and hybridization. It does not perceive cultures as incompatible and “situation specific” but integrated and does not imply an integration of home and host cultures as in the case of hybridization. Such individuals are referred to as world citizens with a global incorporated identity (Roccas and Brewer 2002: 92–93).

#### 2.4.6 Bilingualism and Language Orientation

Biculturalism and bilingualism is interrelated and they very often imply one another. However, they also can occur solely (Hornby 1977: 5). Thus, for example, being bilingual does not necessarily mean to be bicultural as individuals might not identify themselves with both cultures. However, this chapter focuses on bilingualism in a bicultural setting. The importance of discussing bilingualism is stipulated by the fact that the language itself often represents the core value of a minority culture (Smolisz 1999: 119).

Bilingualism is defined by one's ability to speak two languages. However, this simple description remains ambiguous and argued because of the absence of a mutual agreement about language level and skills which individuals should possess to be considered bilingual. Maximal and minimal positions are reflected in different definitions, thus, for example, Bloomfield (1933: 56) refers to "native-like" proficiency, whereas Haugen (1953: 7) indicates an ability to "produce meaningful utterances in the other language" as a sufficient condition to be called bilingual. Butler and Hakuta (2004: 115) employ a broader understanding of bilingualism where the focus lies on communicative skills according to which bilingual individuals differ in their speaking and writing skills.

There are different ways of classifying bilingual individuals. One of them is based on the proficiency language level, where balanced and dominant individuals are differentiated. Balanced individuals are similarly competent in both languages, whereas dominant ones demonstrate a better proficiency in one of the languages (Peal & Lambert 1962). However, Hornby (1977: 3) indicates that one language usually is more dominant in relation to another one. Another classification (Weinreich 1953) differentiates individuals according to their use of linguistic codes. In this categorisation, compound bilinguals hold two linguistic codes but one meaning unit, whereas in coordinate individuals, there are separate linguistic codes and correspondingly two meaning units. Subordinate bilinguals have two codes and one unit, however, the interpretation of the second one happens through the first. Lambert



(1977: 19) delineates additive and subtractive forms of bilingualism. Additive individuals develop the proficiency in both languages in the environment which favours both languages and cultural values and thus leads to the development of a positive identity. On the other hand, subtractive bilinguals are subjected to the pressure to choose the language of the host society, for example, in the case of majority-minority context and may reject speaking their heritage language.

Bilingualism should also be understood as a dynamic process, therefore, language proficiency depends on how often an individual uses the language. Thus, individual's skills might undergo changes in his or her language proficiency (Butler & Hakuta 2004: 120).

When raising a bilingual child, there are many attitudinal factors that affect bilingualism. Parental language and cultural orientation differ and can be bicultural or centric towards just one language and thus influence language developing or maintenance (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2008: 5). Negative attitudes from the society and peers can also lead to different outcomes, where children can either ignore such attitudes or reject speaking one language in front of others as they do not like to appear different from their classmates (Romaine 1995: 238).

One of other important issues rising in the context is biculturalism is if bilingual or multilingual individuals feel like different people when speaking different languages. Referring to numerous works on bilingualism, Pavlenko (2006: 26) states that languages create distinct worlds which make individuals experience a personality shift, different verbal and nonverbal behavior, emotionality when using different languages. However, those who live permanently in a multilingual environment might not necessarily deal with this self-changes. There are also different attitudes about such shifts, when ones enjoy such hybridity, whereas others find it difficult to align which leads to frustration and pain (Pavlenko 2006: 29).

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter comprises a theoretical basis for this work and includes the most important concepts and theories which are applied for the analysis of the findings further on. Identity has been approached from various perspectives and angles. Starting from more general topics, the focus has been narrowed down to bicultural identity and aspects as bilingualism, and other forms of incorporated identities as a multicultural and a European identity.

To sum up, identity is understood as a dynamic concept, linking personal and social aspects. In the context of multicultural societies, individuals can hold multiple allegiances and belongings and thus multiple identities. Within specific Finnish-Russian immigration setting, two cultural orientations within individuals are observed which could lead to bicultural identity. However, bicultural identity is a complex concept and embraces different forms and variations.

### 3 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: RUSSIAN IMMIGRATION IN FINLAND

This chapter introduces the background for the analysis of the situation of immigrants in Finland. It covers the main definitions employed in this area, ethnic minorities in Finland and governmental policies towards immigrants. Most importantly it describes the Russian immigration in Finland accompanied with the historical perspective which has shaped a specific nature of Finnish-Russian relations.

#### 3.1 Immigration: Working Definitions

Immigration means moving away from the country of birth to a new country. It is one of the important issues in any country's domestic policy as it causes changes in political, social and economic settings. States usually control foreign population entering the country and nowadays there is a certain level of concern about illegal immigration (Bolaffi et al. 2003: 178).

Push and pull factors are delineated in migration studies to explain the reasons of immigration and emigration. Push factors are those which make one want to leave; pull factors influence the choice of relocating to another country. Both factors are associated with economic, social and political aspects. Migration leads to the emergence of multicultural societies and the establishment of new ethnic minorities (Bolaffi 2003: 178, 235).

According to Nylund-Oja, Pentikäinen, Horn, Jaakkola & Yli-Vakkuri (1995: 173), in order to be perceived as a minority, certain criteria should be fulfilled. A minority group is numerically inferior to the rest of the population. It possess a non-dominant position, has ethnic, linguistic, religious characteristics different from the host society, expresses a sense of solidarity meaning that they want to maintain their distinct features and also have a

certain level of attachment to the host society. Minority groups can be divided into two categories: internal and external. Internal minorities are rooted cultural minorities, who have existed along with the majority group for a long time and are perceived as “ours”. They share history. External minorities are those who have moved in recent times. In such discourse they are often called “them”, thus constructing an opposition between “us” and “them”. Such a distinction of minorities does not provide a clear picture of the difference as such difference is based on political orientations rather than cultural or historical ones (Mugnani & Solinas 2001: 74). Mugnani and Solinas also note (2001: 78) the reciprocal nature of majority and minority concepts. They are interrelated and cannot be separated.

The concept of minority is often linked to diaspora which before has mostly been described in a Jewish context. However, in contemporary studies, diaspora is understood as a transnational migrant community that maintains material and emotional attachment with their home country while accepting limitations and opportunities in a host country (Esman 2009:14). The features of diaspora are dispersion, homeland orientation and boundary-maintenance which emphasise a distinctive character of a group (Brubaker 2005: 5–6). Thus it is noteworthy that not all immigrant communities create diasporas, but only those who establish boundaries between host and country of origin and maintain separate identity and resistance to assimilation (Esman 2009: 15).

Although very often negative attitudes toward immigrants can be observed in many countries, there is a need for immigrants. Developed countries experience low birth rates and express concern about the amount of people reaching retirement age (Grant 2007: 90). Governments try to create a healthy multicultural society, maintain cultural diversity and an environment for cooperation between host society and existing minorities.

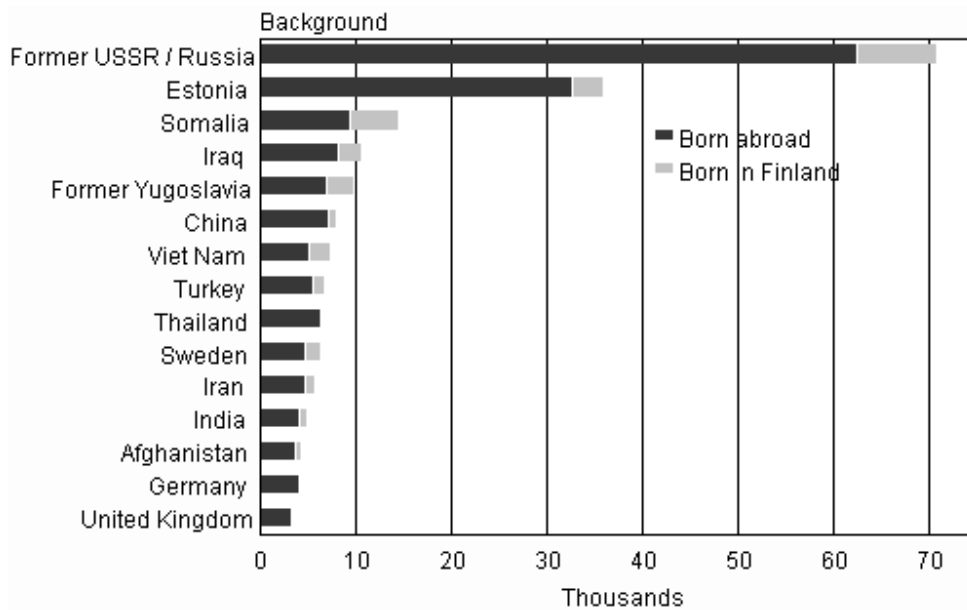
### 3.2 Immigration in Finland: State Policy and Ethnic Minorities

The rate of immigration to Finland is still quite low in comparison with a lot of countries in the European Union. In 2002 only 2 percent of the population was not Finnish. Traditionally Finland was considered as an emigration country. Around 1 million people with Finnish roots live mostly in Sweden, Canada and the USA (Mannila 2010: 29). However, nowadays, Finland is a multicultural society and the amount of immigrants is growing each year.

Regarding ethnic minorities, Finland has had traditionally old ones. The Swedish-Finns who have been living in Finland for 1000 years comprise about six percent of the population. The Lapps (Sami) are the only recognized indigenous people in Scandinavia. The Jews, the Tatars, the Romanies are also among old ethnic minorities in Finland (Koivukangas 2002: 25). A Russian minority in Finland also has a long history and is examined separately in the part dedicated to Russian immigrants in Finland.

Two immigration waves to Finland happened in 1990s. The first is associated with the repatriation program for ethnic Finns from the former Soviet Union launched by the Finnish government. Another wave was caused by an increased number of refugees from former Yugoslavia, Iran, Iraq and Somalia (Sarvimäki 2009: 87). Ethnocentrism can be observed in Finnish immigration policy to a certain degree: Finland wanted to offer a home country to ethnic Finns whose rights and ethnic culture was repressed in some period of history (Mannila 2010: 29–30). This happened in the case of ethnic Finns who after the collapse of the Soviet Union have received the right and opportunity to move to Finland. Labor immigration of Estonians, Russians and other nationalities is also a new phenomenon in Finland (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen 2008: 8). According to the Statistics Finland (the end of 2012), 5.2 per cent of Finland's population comprises people of a foreign origin. 238, 208 were born abroad and 41, 408 born in Finland. Figure 4 shows the size of the groups of

foreign origin and also the proportion between those who were born in Finland and abroad. As we can see, Russians comprise the biggest minority in Finland:



**Figure 3.** Largest groups of foreign origin among Finnish population on 31.12.2012  
Source: Population structure, 2012, Statistics Finland

Throughout years of immigration to Finland, three phases of immigration policies can be observed. The first one happened during the Continuation War when Finland had to evacuate ethnic groups such as Fenno-Ugric Carelians, Ingrians and Veps. There was no specific immigration policy regarding their integration or assimilation. Maintaining border control was the main concern. From the mid-1990s to 2000s another phase of immigration policy in Finland can be discerned with a focus on integration.

This integration policy assumes the maintenance of individual's ethnic culture along with his or her adaptation to Finnish culture (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen 2008: 9). Such

integration policy was presented in the Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers in 1999 which purpose is

[...] to promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures which help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in society (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers 1999).

One of the definitions presented in the Act is the concept of integration which is understood as immigrants' participation in working life and society meanwhile maintaining their culture and language. Integration is also observed from the perspective of measures that should be taken by authorities in order to provide services for such integration. Therefore, elaborated by the government, an integration plan for immigrants includes language courses, vocational education, career counseling, which would lead to a permanent type of employment and successful functioning in Finnish life (Sarvimäki 2009: 112–113).

The most recent phase of Finnish immigration policy concentrates on labour migration. The Government Migration Policy Programme (2006) emphasises the importance of the promotion of work-related immigration taking into consideration future labour shortage. Ageing is becoming a problem in Finland and the government encourages attraction of immigrants with necessary skills and qualities (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen 2008: 10). Among pull factors that Finland has are the ecological environment, stability and safety, public services, and the wage level (Government Migration Policy Programme 2006).

The Ministry of Education and Culture also promotes cultural diversity and multiculturalism in the Strategy for Cultural Policy (2009). Immigrants are seen as a source for creativity and talent and positively impact Finnish culture. Cultural policy actions are necessary to avoid isolation and marginalization of immigrants and their culture (Strategy for Cultural Policy 2009: 16).

It is also important to note that there is a debate on immigration issues. Despite the promotion of immigration and policies undertaken by the Finnish government, an increasing level of negative attitudes toward immigrants can be observed. There is a concern about the number of asylum seekers and refugees coming to Finland each year. Such views find support among some population and by the Perussuomalaiset party (“Basic Finns”) (Mannila 2010: 36–37).

### 3.3 Historical Context: Russian-Finnish Relations in a Nutshell

History has shaped the specific relation between Finland and Russia. After the war between Sweden and Russia in 1808–1809, Finland was ceded to Russia and became The Grand Duchy with a considerable amount of autonomy. This helped Finland to develop a sense of nationality. The old legal system remained; Finnish language got an equal status with Swedish. Helsinki became the capital of Finland in 1812 (Zetterberg 2011; Singleton 1981: 272). Later, in order to prevent Finnish separatism and considering the rise of nationalistic movements in Europe, the Russian government started a policy known as Russification. Russian became the official language, Finnish conscripts had to serve in the Russian army and the Russian legislation in Finland was implemented (Nylund-Oja et al 1995: 187).

In 1917 Finland gained independence and became a republic in 1919 with K.J. Ståhlberg as a president. In 1939 the Soviet Union and Germany signed a nonaggression pact and a secret protocol dividing Europe. According to this pact Finland was assigned to the Soviet Union. In November 1939 the Soviet Union invaded Finland which is known as the Winter War. According to the Treaty of Moscow in 1940, Southeastern Finland, comprising 10% of Finnish territory, was given to the Soviet Union (Zetterberg 2011). Finns experienced fear and hatred towards the Soviet Union but also feelings of cultural superiority regarding the Soviet Union as “a representative of Asiatic barbarism” (Singleton 1981: 275).



Following the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany, Finland started the so called Continuation War with the Soviet Union to retake the territories lost in the Winter War. However in 1943 a policy of “good neighborliness” was adopted by the government of Urho Kekkonen who understood it as the only way to maintain the freedom and the sovereignty of Finland (Singleton 1981: 278) which in Western discourse was regarded as “Finlandization” (Voronov 2010: 37). The Peace Treaty was signed in 1944 with more loss of the territory on the Finnish side. Finland was also obliged to pay war reparation the payment of which was completed in 1952 (Zetterberg 2011).

Memories from the Soviet Union times and its perception as an enemy due to military conflicts (Voronov 2010: 36), the increasing amount of Russian immigrants and the economic recession in Finland influenced the level of negative stereotyping towards Russian speaking immigrants. In 1995 17% of Finnish population expressed negative views on Russians (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000: 5). Nowadays the situation is changing. Russia is seen as an important economic partner of Finland and one of the main export destinations. Finland benefits from tourism from Russia which creates new employment possibilities and the development of holiday resorts. However, at the same time there is a concern about Russians buying property in Finland which is largely discussed in the media.

### 3.4 Russians in Finland before Finnish Independence

The first Russians appeared in a territory of the so called Old Finland after the Great Northern War (1700–1721) when the Swedish Empire had to cede Eastern Finland to Russia. Russian serfs were transferred to the Russian Government of Wyborg from Jaroslavl, Tula and many villages. During the period of autonomy as Grand Duchy of Finland, Finland gained a significant amount of autonomy with the right to introduce its citizenship and had restrictions for Russian migration to Finland (Nylund-Oja et al. 1995: 183–185). The following categories of Russians resided in Finland during that time:

merchants, members of Tsarist civil service, army, navy and clergy. In 1880 the number of Russians comprised 4.200 people which was 0, 2 % of the whole population of Finland (Nylund-Oja et al. 1995: 185–187). When Finland got independence status in 1917 there were 6000 Russians with a permanent residence in Finland. After the Civil War many Russian soldiers were sent out, some however, were allowed to stay because of being tsarist officers. Many of them later emigrated to Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Prague and Novi Sad. Generally the Russian community tried to assimilate because of anti-Russian sentiments in Finland (Nylund-Oja et al. 1995: 188–189).

### 3.5 Returning Migrants

As it was mentioned earlier, before the 1970–80s Finland was a country with a relatively small amount of immigrants. In 1950 the immigrants comprised only 0.3 percent of the entire population. The situation began changing in the beginning of 1990 (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000: 2). In 1990 the Finnish president Mauno Koivisto launched a program that allowed people with Finnish descent to move to Finland. Such immigrants received the status of “returnees”. They were those of Finnish descendance who moved to the territory of former Soviet Union in 1920s–30s or Ingrian Finns who starting from 17<sup>th</sup> century emigrated to Ingria. There was also a group of ethnic Finns who emigrated to other parts of Russia between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century and those who moved after World War II (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000: 3). Among the reasons for implementing such a repatriation program were labour shortage (Nylund-Oja et al. 1995: 175) and an ethnocentric approach of the Finnish immigration policy (Mannila 2010: 30).

As Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000: 3) states, it is not correct to regard Ingrian Finns as the only ethnic remigrants in Finland for there were other groups comprising the population of ethnic Finns in Soviet Union. Therefore it is important to address the issue of Ingrians as they constitute a significant amount of returnees. The origin of the name is uncertain; it is

Izhora in Russian, Ingermanland in German and Swedish (Nylund-Oja et al. 1995: 176). The Ingrian Finns moved to the territory of Ingria, which is now Leningrad Oblast, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This area became part of Sweden after the Stolbova Piece Agreement in 1617 and Sweden was interested to change the religion of this region and thus replace the Orthodox population with Lutherans. Lutheranism became a part of the Ingrian identity and the factor that prevented assimilation with the mainstream Russian population (Nylund-Oja et al. 1995: 177–178). During the Northern War (1700–1721) Ingermanland was annexed to Russia, Ingrian Finns turned out to be isolated from the Finnish population that was under Swedish rule. With the establishment of Saint Petersburg, there were more ties and contacts with other ethnic groups and the Russian population. After 1809 when Finland became the Grand Duchy of Finland and a part of the Russian Empire, the borders with the homeland reopened again; different cultural societies and language training courses, Finnish newspapers were established before Russification policies were launched in 1890s (Rimpiläinen 2001: 103–104). In the Soviet Union Finns were seen as a threat to a communist regime and were relocated to Siberia and other parts of the Soviet Union which made it difficult to maintain their ethnic culture and identity. Finnish language was banned, Lutheran churches were closed (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000: 5; Rimpiläinen 2001: 105).

Among the reasons for Ethnic Finns to “return” was a spiritual connection for older Finnish speaking people. Middle aged migrants were bilingual if they spoke Finnish with parents. They were motivated to move to Finland because of a political and an economic situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union and later on because of the fear of having sons conscripted into the Russian army in the war with Chechenya (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000: 4). 20 000 returning migrants from the former Soviet Union moved to Finland by 1998. Many people rediscovered their Finnish roots although very often they had been Russified or Estonianised (Rimpiläinen 2001: 1079).

Nowadays Russians are the second largest minority in Finland after the Swedish speaking Finns (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland). There are Finnish-Russian schools and

organisations where the Russian culture and language are maintained and supported. Noteworthy, in 1992 Russia and Finland signed the treaties that embrace preservation of identity and cultural heritage of the ethnic groups originating from Russia in Finland and Finns and Finno-Ugric peoples in Russia (Nylund-Oja et al. 1995: 198).

## 4 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter describes the methodological framework and introduces the methods of collecting and analysing the data. Holistic narrative (Lieblich 1998) and thematic forms of narrative analysis (Riessman 2008) are combined in order to get the most out of data collected by nine semi-structured interviews.

### 4.1 Research Method and Analysis

According to Smith (2000: 327), there is no general agreement about characteristics of narrative inquiry. There are various definitions of a narrative and diverse ways of studying and interpreting narratives. Nevertheless scholars keep developing new approaches and models for investigation (Squire, Andrews & Tambokou 2008: 1).

Smith (2000: 328) defines narrative as “accounts of personal experiences or the experiences of others” where accounts comprise interpretation, description and emotions. Through stories which are often perceived as a synonym of narratives, people make sense of their experiences, events and themselves in the world (Wells 2011: 5). This is why this method was chosen for the current study as it is consistent with the objectives set in the introductory part and it provides rich and complex data for analysis.

According to Lieblich et al. (1998: 2–3), narrative research implies the analysis of any narrative materials collected either through interviews or literary work. It has gained significance in the research on identity, culture and a narrator’s world. Through telling stories people transfer their understanding of social phenomena, construct meaning of their experiences. In stories one can observe the personality, the life of an individual, thus stories represent identities and have a subjective nature. Lieblich et al. also claim that narratives are affected by many factors such as context, narrator’s mood, and in the case of interviews,

by the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. Stories change and develop as identities do, whereas texts remain static (Lieblich et al. 1998: 7–8). The material is interpretative and thus researcher should be prepared for ambiguity and possess sensitive and reflexive skills (Lieblich et al. 1998: 10).

Lieblich et al. provide four types of narrative interpretation: holistic-content, categorical-content, holistic-form and categorical-form. They are visualised in this table and briefly introduced below.

**Table 1.** Types of narrative interpretations

Content		Form	
Holistic	Categorical	Holistic	Categorical

This study applies a holistic-content mode which focuses on the entire story and its content. Lieblich et al. (1998: 62–63) provides the instructions to work with the text from this perspective where special foci or main themes are defined throughout the text and their development is observed. Within this mode two methods can be discerned when the text is described through general impression or through major themes which provide understanding for the whole text (Lieblich et al. 1998: 87). Based on Lieblich’s description of this method, Wells (2011: 45) formulates the central question of such a holistic content analysis “what is the core pattern in the life story?” This pattern is found through global impression. Themes can be defined as they are repeated throughout the story (Wells 2011: 47).

Categorical-content form is known as a content analysis which is a classical method of analysis. The data is analysed according to the categories. These categories are determined

based on theories or in the process of reading the empirical material. Breaking the text into categories and sorting data is an important process of this analysis (Lieblich et al. 1998: 112–114). In the analysis with the foci on the form, a story's structure, plot development, linguistic and stylistic characteristics are under observation (Lieblich et al. 1998: 88–91). Content and form orientations answer different research questions and might be used for different purposes. However, they equally express personality, perceptions and values of an individual (Lieblich et al. 1998:13–18, 88). Therefore, the emphasis of the current research is the content but without neglecting form, which enriches the narrative analysis.

Wells (2011: 7) emphasizes the holistic nature of narrative analysis where content, structure and context are examined as a whole. Extended accounts are preserved and “treated as units, rather than fragmented into thematic categories” (Riessman 2008: 12). Narrative analysis questions how and why the story is constructed the way it is, the purpose of the story and its audience. However Riessman admits that narrative analysis can also develop categories and different approaches can be combined as each brings more understanding of the phenomenon (Riessman 2008: 11–13).

Riessman also represents four approaches in narrative inquiry among which thematic and structural are comparable to Lieblich et al.'s content and form dimensions. The former examines what is spoken or told whereas the later questions how it is construed. These two approaches, according to Riessman, constitute the basis of narrative analysis. Other approaches are dialogic/performative and focus is on how narratives are constructed during the interaction between speakers. In visual analysis images become research data. These approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be combined and employed (Riessman 2008: 19).

Riessman provides many possibilities and ways for conducting a narrative thematic research. The narratives are not fractured into categories or themes; each interview is interpreted separately and then compared with other interviews. The focus is on the content,

the language is only a tool. Some examples of the interpretations she gives are more similar to approaches used in grounded theory. However, unlike grounded theory, thematic analysis requires prior research providing guidelines for the inquiry process and pays attention to sequencing and causal relations between categories (Riessman 2008: 53–76).

To sum up, the current research employs a narrative analysis and combines two ways described by Lieblich et al. (1998) and Riessman (2008). First, each case is analysed separately using a holistic content approach and then, applying a thematic analysis, the main themes are discussed.

#### 4.2 Data Collection and Research Process

Interviews are often used as a method of collecting data for narrative research. People like to tell stories and answers in interview situations can create narratives, especially if they are biographical or historical in nature (Czarniawska 2004: 51). However, some participants do not feel comfortable to share their narratives with people they do not know. The goal of narrative interviews is to achieve a comprehensive story about experiences and events. Thus, the researcher has to create a situation in which an interviewee would be willing to speak and express own views and attitudes. Complementary questions in this case help interviewees to remember details and to develop their stories (Riessman 2008: 23–25).

Nine semi-structured interviews were carried out for this study. The recruitment was done through networking as well as an advertisement about the research which was posted in the Russian-Finnish theme groups of the social network Vkontakte. All interviews were conducted in Russian. Table 1 below provides interviewees' profiles; table 2 gives the information on the interviewing processes:



**Table 2.** Profile of interviewees

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Place of birth	Russian speaking parent/s	Years living in Russia/USSR
A	22	F	Finland	2	0
B	23	F	Russia	2	3
C	24	F	Russia	2	9
D	28	M	Russia	2	7
F	24	F	Russia	1	5
G	24	F	Finland	1	0
H	25	F	Russia	1	3
K	23	F	Finland	1	0
L	22	F	Kazakhstan <sup>1</sup>	2	3

**Table 3.** Data on interviews

Interviewee	Number of interviews	Duration of interview/min	Method of interviewing
A	2	30+15	Skype
B	2	27+20	Skype, face to face
C	2	19+18	Skype
D	1	20	Skype
F	1	25	Skype
G	1	26	Skype
H	2	20+25	Skype
K	1	28	Skype
L	1	35	Skype

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<sup>1</sup> Kazakhstan was a part of USSR and the interviewee's parents are Russian speaking living in Kazakhstan.

## 5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter I present the analyses of the collected data, i.e. my findings. First, all the interviews are described and analysed separately using a holistic narrative approach as specified in the previous chapter. Second, main themes of the interviews are identified, which by employing thematic analysis, are observed and discussed in relation with theoretical concepts outlined in the theoretical part of the current work. Lastly, the summary of the findings are presented.

### 5.1 Holistic Analysis of Interviews

In the beginning I will present the analysis of each interview applying a holistic narrative approach. I conducted follow-up interviews with four participants, thus the references to the first interview are denoted as IA1 or IB1 where I means the interview, the following letters refer to the people I was interviewing, the numbers represent the first or second interview with a participant. Number 2 in such combinations indicates follow-up interviews. In the case when one single interview with a person was conducted, no numbers are applied.

#### 5.1.1 Interviewee A

In the beginning the interviewee pointed out that her mother is of Ingrian origin and the father is Russian. They moved to Finland in 1991 and she was born in Finland. She considers Finnish as her first language although she speaks Russian with her parents and her Russian skills can be regarded as native too. Later she adds that some combination of Finnish and Russian is the best way to speak for her.

She does not have any particular memories about questioning why she spoke Russian and other children did not, and she claims that it did not worry her anyhow. Most of her friends

were Finnish simply because there were not many Russian children where she was growing up. She mentions that children were teasing her for being Russian and even adults could keep asking her if she knew Finnish: “Sometimes I faced situations when people treated me a bit different.” (IA2) However, she positively comments that one should pay less attention to this and states that she feels “mostly Finnish” (IA1). The use of “mostly” emphasizes her orientation towards the Finnish culture, however the adverb also indicates the existence of another part. She continues:

If I am asked where I am from, I answer I am a Finn, but of course, I understand that I have a lot of Russianness in myself, but my basis is Finnish but I like many Russian things. (IA1)

These sentences show a dual nature which is reflected on the syntactic level in the use of “but-clauses”. Growing up, she questioned her belonging and felt a strong necessity to tie herself to one of the cultures:

When I was a child I went from one extreme to another. Who am I? I am a Finn, no, I am not. Yes, I am Russian. No I am a Finn. I hated these and those at the same time. (IA2)

Later she realized that there was no need to choose: “You just have to be yourself.” (IA1) Referring to memories from childhood, the interviewee also says that her parents tried to raise her as a Finn: “We celebrated only Finnish holidays. We tried to interact with Finnish people. We did not look for ties with Russians.” (IA2) Evaluating the outcome of this experience, she states that “they managed very well even better than they could imagine. Because I consider myself Finnish.” (IA2) Although, she adds that they have always been speaking Russian at home and watching Russian movies. She was studying at the Finnish school and learnt to read and write in Russian only in a high school.

She contrasts Finnish and Russian mentalities and finds Finns more reserved: “They enclose themselves.” (IA1) But this feature is not perceived as something negative, instead

she argues that by this Finns give more space to others, “let others express themselves” (IA1). According to her, Russians do not have this quality but they are seen and known as more open and positive.

Interestingly, in spite of the fact of being born and raised in Finland, and relating herself “mostly” to Finnish people, the interviewee admits some difference between her and those who were born to Finnish parents: “I am trying to be a Finn but they already are. Even though I am trying to be one of them, I sometimes do things different.” (IA1)

This was a turning point in the interview when she expressed the necessity to belong, the wish to be a member of the group which she claimed before she was. The interviewee admits that she could come too close or speak too loud to people which is not very common here in Finland. She tries to prove her belonging to Finland through the language as well: “I try to use some unexpected phrases, for example. I know Finnish better than many real Finns.” (IA2) When speaking Finnish she tries to make an impression, but in Russian she feels more relaxed: “I can speak however I want.” (IA2)

When travelling to Russia, she feels as a stranger: “I am a tourist in Russia, in Finland I feel home.” (IA1) She experiences a cultural shock every time she goes there: “People are behaving absolutely different, they might shout at each other. They communicate and interact not like we do.” (IA2) Here by the use of the pronoun “we”, she refers to herself as a part of Finnish society and culture.

Talking about belonging to the Russian culture, she emphasizes the importance of the knowledge of Russian which she considers an advantage for her future career. According to her, “belonging to both cultures is richness” (IA1), and she “might have a wider world view than others, having something that takes more years for others to learn.” (IA1) Both languages are important to her but she sees her priority in Finnish because she has Ingrian roots and feels a bit far from the Russian culture. She considers Finland as a home country

“trying to tie more strongly” (IA1), “maybe even stronger than real Finns” (IA2). She uses the adjective “real” implying that she has Russian parents, thus ethnically she is not a real Finn. Russia is seen as a country of possibilities, where the relatives live, but “Finland remains a priority” (IA1).

The interviewee shows strong attachment to the Finnish culture without refusing her links to Russia. She feels mostly Finnish and Finland is her home but throughout the interview a “trying to be” motive can be observed. After years of identity search and attempts to choose one culture, she has come to the conclusion that you should accept yourself as you are.

However, the duality appears throughout the whole interview and it is reflected in lexical and syntactic language choices (but-clauses, adverbs). On the one hand, she claims that she feels at home and as a Finn, on the other hand, having Russian parents and speaking the Russian language makes her think she is not Finnish enough and she strongly wants to be one of them. Yet, she does not perceive it as a conflict anymore and wisely recalls memories from her childhood. She feels comfortable in Finland: “It is my place, I belong here.” (IA2)

### 5.1.2 Interviewee B

This interviewee moved to Finland when she was three years old and she does not have early memories from that time. She was told that she was a very sociable child, enjoying talking and playing with children, this is why the move to Finland was difficult. She became reserved as she could not speak Finnish and nobody in the family before the arrival spoke Finnish. She refused learning and speaking Finnish and learnt it only when she went to a Finnish school. Even now she states that most of the time she thinks in Russian and prefers reading books in Russian.

She refers to some sort of a nostalgic feeling about Russia even though she moved at a very early age:

I have a strange nostalgia about Russia like all immigrant children whose parents were watching Russian and Soviet movies and telling how it had been there before. (IB1)

She reflects: “Maybe it is because we are always thinking that somewhere is better.” (IB2) Moreover, she adds that she does not have any experience living in Russia and when travelling there, she understands that her childhood perception of Russia is wrong. In fact, she would not like to live there; she likes it “from outside” (IB1).

She has not experienced any prejudices or negative treatment because she is Russian, although she mentions that “there has historically been negative opinion about Russia in Finland but it is changing now and people become more open and positive towards Russians.” (IB1) Nevertheless, she has recently begun thinking if her Russian origin and surname affects her job hunting: “I have just watched a documentary about racism in Finland. [...] so I wonder if there are any prejudices when they see my name when I send CV.” (IB2)

In both interviews she addresses the concept of the “Russian soul”: “I like it and it is impossible to explain what it is to others, not Russians.” (IB2) However, she emphasizes her difference with Russians from Russia: “They are entirely different” but she “feels Russian in Finland” and laughing she adds that she is not a Finn in Russia: “I just feel that I am used to a completely different life than people have there.” (IB2) Very often she has to prove her Russian friends that she is one of them:

Sometimes when they talk about some hassles or difficult situations in their life and when I comment on those, they say that I cannot know as I am a Finn, I have always lived in Finland, I have had a good life. (IB2)

She notices their superior attitude towards her, because she has not experienced such difficulties:

This is rubbish. Yes, I can say that I have not had such problems. But it is not because I am Finnish or Russian but because I had right people around, right environment and a right attitude! (IB2)

She finds herself both Russian and Finnish: “I am something between. I am like 50/50.” (IB1) Her qualities as calmness and the tendency to deliberate she considers more Finnish but in situations when she does not share or agree with some things common for Finnish culture and mentality, she feels more Russian:

For example, about Finnish feminism. If a couple goes to a restaurant and then with a calculator they count half/half. Very often even when a man decides to pay, Finnish women think it humiliates them. I do not understand it. (IB2)

The fact that at times she is not understood by her Finnish friends, she explains by her Russianness too:

I can think and deliberate about things which might not even come to their mind [their-Finn’s, my comment]. We talk about different things. There are things I speak more about with Russians. (IB2)

This differentiation, however, became less with an age: “Before I had strict separation: Russian friends, Finnish friends.” (IB2) According to her, this is also associated with the status which is very important for Russians: “Everyone thinks too much what to say, how you look, what you do.” (IB2) Another concept common for Russian mentality is meeting someone’s expectations:

If we take as an example my mother...She is constantly burdening me that I need to get education faster, find a good job, need to grow in status, career, money...Life has to go according to a plan. It is probably even a Soviet mentality. (IB2)

In her second interview she defines herself as multicultural and at the same time she states: “I probably have no strong cultural attachment. My mother often says to me that I have no motherland.” (IB2)

This concept of multiculturalism is associated with her having a lot of international friends and travelling experience. This is why she does not feel particularly attached to any culture or country. The very notion of motherland does not seem important to her, she feels open about moving to a new place as home for her is not a physical place: “It is people around you. Of course, maybe it is because at least two cultures are in me.” (IB2) She considers Finland as home, she likes being in Finland and she likes Finns: “You know what to expect from them” and “everything works the way it should.” (IB1)

The Russian language is very important to her and she would like her children to speak both languages as she does: “Of course, Russian, but I would definitely teach them Finnish too. It is cool.” (IB2) She refers to the fact that only five million people speak Finnish and regardless where they would live, it is important that her children would speak both languages.

The current interviewee demonstrates her links with the Russian language and culture as well as Finnish. First she claims that she perceives herself as both and she is somewhere between having both Russian and Finnish features. At the same time she considers herself as multicultural without the necessity to have a motherland. She feels comfortable the way she is and there is no need to attach to a specific cultural frame: “I am proud of what I am regardless cultures.” (IB2) The fact that “she embraces at least two cultures” (IB2) gave her an “everything is possible” attitude. She refers to her mother’s example about coming to an unknown country without knowing anything and anybody with a child and a senior person.



### 5.1.3 Interviewee C

The interviewee's family moved to Finland because of her family's Ingrian roots when she was nine years old. Unlike many others who moved to Finland at an earlier age, the interviewee remembers that time. The parents told her about their plans to move quite late and it was surprising for her. After their move to Finland they were going to Russia very often: "Every weekend we went to Russia. I think we had been living between two countries for a year." (IC1) However, with some time, travelling became less.

During the first year she could not speak any Finnish which did not make her "especially sad or bored" (IC1) as she had a sister to play with. There was no strong feeling of missing Russia: "I quite fast readjusted that my new home was Finland." (IC1)

She learnt Finnish and went to the Finnish school. She recalls the time of telling her mother not to speak Russian:

I think I was in fifth grade and I did not want anybody to hear that she speaks to me in Russian. I was maybe 11, 12 or 13 years old. Later I stopped to care. I even began liking that I am different. (IC2)

She explains it to herself by the fact that every teenager at some period wants to be accepted by others, does not want to seem strange. That is why she asked her mother not to speak Russian in front of other children so she could be part of their circle.

The interviewee has not experienced any prejudices towards her and connects this fact with her speaking Finnish very fluently: "It means a lot if you speak Finnish as Finns. They do not care that I have other roots." (IC1) The importance of the language is emphasized by her and this constitutes her connection with Finnish people. But regardless the fact that she feels at home in Finland and speaks native Finnish, she claims that she feels Russian in Finland and Finnish in Russian:

When I am with Finns, I differ from them, when I am with Russians who are from Russia, then I am different from them too. Yes, I am special (laughing). (IC2)

By this statement she contrasts Russians grown up in Finland and Russia in the way they look, behave and dress. The note about being special is accompanied by laughing which does not imply her aspiration to be special and different but her realization to be a “sort of between.” (IC1, IC2)

Reflecting on mentality, she perceives differences in the way things are done by Finns and Russians. Finns like following rules and laws and find it confusing when something is out of order while Russians in this case are prone to react immediately and take an action regardless of rules: “They know how to solve the situation.” (IC1) She gets along both with Finns and Russians but notices that she might have more Russian friends, referring to the Russians grown in Finland:

It is easier to be friends with them. You need to agree on meetings with Finns. I do not understand it sometimes. With Russians you can just call and ask: Hey! I will come over, where are you now? Finns are not so spontaneous. (IC2)

She appreciates living in Finland and would not like to go back to Russia: “It would be complicating for me, one needs to get used to such a life, and everybody is running.” (IC1) “I am not longing for Russia.” (IC2) Despite the fact that the interviewee lives in a big city in Finland, she underlines the difference between big cities in Finland and Russia: “It is quieter in Finland, cleaner.” (IC1)

The interviewee always tries to find a compromise and positions herself in both cultures. Conducting an interview I saw that the interviewee has a dog. Her dog’s name comes from the Russian word “юркий” which means fast, agile. “Look, even my dog’s name is Russian. But it sounds good in Finnish, too” (IC2), she said. She gave a Russian nickname for a

dog, however a Finnish person would not be surprised with such a name either and can regard it as Finnish.

The interviewee did not express a strong attachment to either of the countries. At the same time she does not neglect the ties she has. She quite positively refers to both cultures and does not notice a conflict of being torn in-between. She does not display a sense of pride regarding belonging to cultures. The very notion of homeland or motherland is not relevant to her, however according to her, the fact that she is a part of both cultures lets her compare and understand more, and this is what she finds very positive and beneficial.

#### 5.1.4 Interviewee D

This interviewee moved to Finland when he was 7 years old. The family was living in Siberia and his grandmother was Finnish. After the collapse of the Soviet Union his grandmother was able to move to Finland and then the whole family joined her too. The interviewee did not mention any problems with adaptation after moving, although he points out that as there were not so many foreigners, Finns were cautious about them:

When we moved to Oulu, there were Russian children there. I mingled with them more. Later we made Finnish friends. When I learnt Finnish, we were also invited to our Finnish friends' places, played with them in the yard. (ID)

He gets along with both Russian and Finnish people and explains the reason behind it by his understanding of both cultures: "I have much in common with Russians. I also know how things work in Finland." (ID) When travelling to Russia, he feels "*svoim*" there. "*Svoi* (one's own, "I am one of these people") and "*chuzhoi*" (alien, foreign) are important social categories in Russia. Being or feeling "*svoim*" implies openness, warmth and mutual knowledge (Gladkova 2013: 182–184). Thus, the interviewee assumes that he knows how to behave; he is one of them and belongs to the Russian society, too. Although he admits the fact of belonging to both cultures, he differentiates them and finds some features ap-

pealing or unacceptable for him: “Russians can be vulgar, try to avoid rules and laws, the same how it is done in Russia. I would not like to accept this. [...] Many concepts are different.” (ID) He also indicates the difference between Russians raised in Finland or Russia.

When travelling to Russia he does not feel foreign there, however he states: “I have something both from Russia and Finland but to feel in both countries completely at home is impossible.” (ID) He recognizes this fact but it has not become a problem for him as he feels comfortable in both environments. The interviewee<sup>2</sup> finds it positive to be part of both cultures and refers to the development of relations and businesses between Russia and Finland: “Even Finns now try to learn Russian at university, and language courses.” (ID)

#### 5.1.5 Interviewee F

This participant has a Russian mother and a Finnish father. She was born in Russia and moved to Finland when she was five years old. Her father spoke Russian too, thus in the beginning before moving to Finland she spoke Russian to him. She has some memories about going to a Finnish kindergarden:

Fortunately there was one Russian girl there so I could talk to her and she helped me with Finnish. I also asked my dad at home in Finnish what this and that meant. In the kindergarden they were a bit afraid that I was a foreigner. (IF)

She uses Finnish only at work as she mostly has Russian speaking friends. Regarding her sense of belonging she claims: “I am probably more Russian than Finnish. It is easier for

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<sup>2</sup> This interview was the shortest one and did not provide an emotional insight of personal identifications. It can be associated with the common belief that men and women display differences in respect of their emotional expressivity. Research also indicates some difficulties of obtaining adequate data from male participants for it being laconic and concise (Affleck 2012: 156). Thus I could assume that sharing feelings is influenced by gender, however due to a single case in data I would prefer to abstain from such generalizations.

me to be with Russians, they understand me better.” (IF) Therefore, most of her friends are Russians: “I do not really interact with Finns.” (IF) The reason behind this is according to her that they are very withdrawn and reserved and she negatively describes them in comparison with Russian people:

I do not know how to say it nicely...I think that Finns are stupid. If you go somewhere with them, you talk about how tasty beer is...I do not know. With Russians you can talk about philosophy. (IF)

She contrasts Russian and Finnish mentality. Interestingly, despite the fact that she was brought to Finland at the age of five, she claims that she was brought up as a Russian. In order to find a reason of such a negative attitude towards Finnish people, I looked for an answer in her childhood but she has not experienced any prejudices towards her:

Nobody was offending or insulting me. Nobody can really say that I am Russian when I speak. I know some stories from friends, but nothing like that happened to me. (IF)

The interviewee states that when being a child she did not think this way about Finland and people here. It came later when she grew up and began comparing cultures and characters. She dislikes the withdrawn nature of Finns. It makes her detach from such people. She strongly identifies herself with Russian culture “especially in Finland” (IF). However, she adds:

When I go to Russia to visit my relatives, then I start thinking that I am not Russian (laughing). But even then I do not think that I am Finnish. I think that I am European. If I travel to Russia or Europe I try not to say that I am Finnish. I am better European than Finnish, I am more proud to be Russian. (IF)

This laughing signifies a contradictory situation which she realises herself. Particularly in Finland she feels distinct and claims to be Russian but when travelling to the country she identifies herself with, she feels like a stranger. Despite neglecting the fact of being

Finnish, the participant grew up in Finland and left Russia at an early age. Her perceptions of the country are different from those who live in Russia. She is used to the Finnish settings and the Finnish way of doing things.

Another important concept which she refers to in her statement is “being European”. The interviewee positions herself as more European than Finnish and as more Russian than Finnish, thereby constructing oppositions: Europe vs. Finland and Russia vs. Finland.

The Russian language and culture remain a priority for her: “All my relatives are Russian.” (IF) Between Russian and Finnish cultures she would choose Russian regardless the fact that her father is Finnish. She does not have a sense of home in Finland:

All the time I am longing for some other places. Not about Russia. I would not like to live there. Somewhere in Europe... When I talk to Finns, go outside, I do not feel that I am a Finn, that I am from here or I should be here. I do not want to stay here. I have a thought of living somewhere else in the future where I will work and raise my kids. (IF)

The attitude towards Finland and Finnish people is constructed through negative sentences which indicate her denial of her Finnish belonging:

I do **not** feel that I am a Finn.

I do **not** want to stay here.

I do **not** like it.

I do **not** think I am Finnish.

I try **not** to say that I am Finnish. (IF)

Through this negation she wants to point out that she does not belong here, she is different and does not have any connection with the country and culture she grew up in. The interviewee has not given any reasons for her perceptions and attitudes towards Finland.

### 5.1.6 Interviewee G

This interviewee has a Belarusian mother and a Finnish father. She was born in Finland. She has always spoken Russian with her mother and Finnish with the father. Every summer they went to visit her grandparents in Belarus, besides, she was studying in a Russian-Finnish school where she could use both languages. She uses Finnish more in everyday life but associates Russian with emotions and closeness with her mother:

I think in Finnish. When I sleep, I dream in Russian. I don't know why. When I was little, I was writing and thinking more in Russian because when you describe feelings it is easier to say in Russian, because there are not so many words in Finnish for emotions. Or because it is different with a mother. (IG)

According to the survey made by Grosjean (2010: 128), the language of dreams among bilinguals varies and depends on the situation and people they are dreaming about. The same applies to the use of language when describing emotions where the choice in the language can be stipulated by the different factors: traumas, habits, people with whom one shared emotions. This participant from the current research has close ties with her mother which affects her choice of the language when describing feelings.

She mostly has Finnish friends but even with those who also have Russian parents she speaks Finnish. Despite the fact that she was born and raised in Finland, she perceives her distinctiveness with Finnish people:

Yes, sometimes I notice. People might not even know that I am half Russian. My mother was bringing me up in a Russian way and the father in Finnish. [...] I think I am more open, I tell more about myself, I get to know people faster, I get close to people. I hug, smile. I can make compliments. Finns are a bit reserved. It takes more time for them to get to know a person. They are afraid a bit. (IG)

She contrasts Russian and Finnish cultures by their open and reserved nature. In this opposition she positions herself closer to the Russian side. However, she states that she does not look like a Russian person when she thinks about stereotypes people have: a lot of makeup, high heels, etc. According to her, belonging to two cultures is very useful and she emphasizes the importance of being bilingual. It also gives her a better understanding of people and children from different backgrounds:

I understand them more. At work there are many children whose father and mother are from different cultures. I understand that they live between two cultures. The others, who have not experienced this, cannot understand it. (IG)

By using “others” she contrasts monocultural and bicultural individuals. She also highlights the importance of the language and critically refers to the couples where Russian is not used and not taught to children: “I would be very angry if my mother did so.” (IG)

Although she admits her having both Russian and Finnish sides, she argues that she might be “a bit more Finnish” due to the fact that she was born and raised in Finland. The dominance of one culture does not make her less bicultural. The connection to her mother, the knowledge of the Russian language, being an Orthodox Christian and openness are perceived as Russian parts in her personality: “I am a bit more Finnish, but my soul is Russian. I have very good relations with my mother. I am also Orthodox Christian. This is more Russian.” (IG)

#### 5.1.7 Interviewee H

The interviewee has a Russian mother and a Finnish father. She moved to Finland at the age of three. She started her story with sad memories from childhood:



When we moved I could not speak Finnish. The children were bullying and calling me *ryssä*<sup>3</sup>. I have quite bad memories about that time. Sometimes when walking with my mom and she started speaking Russian, I was telling her that we should speak Finnish, as we are from Finland. (IH1)

I was lying to people that my mother is Finnish, that I am 100% Finnish. I felt ashamed to go somewhere with my mother. What if someone finds out? (IH2)

Having experienced a negative attitude towards her because of her Russian roots and having a strong wish to be accepted by her peers, she refused to speak Russian even with her mother. According to her experiences, one was not accepted by Finns unless he or she was a Finn: “You could feel that you are not one of them, there was some kind of a wall between you.” (IH2) Therefore, she was often with Russians who were in the same situation as she was. At the age of thirteen she experienced a turning point when she realized that “there is nothing bad to be Russian” (IH1) and she ironically recalls the time when she was lying and trying to prove to be Finnish:

Oh, how foolish I was. Now I think that it is happiness to have two languages, two cultures. Then I stopped proving Finns that I am Finnish. I began showing that I am Russian too and proud of it. If you do not like it, then do not talk to me. (IH2)

The interviewee explains the fact of such a negative attitude by the time when she moved, when Finland did not have many immigrants and the old generation still remembered the war. She cannot evaluate the situation now as Finns perceive her as one of them even when they know that she is half Russian: “Finns think that I am Finnish. I think, talk as other Finns. [...] It is difficult to explain. I have the same opinions as they do.” (IH2) She gives an example of her opinion about Russian laws and things going on in Russia: “As a Finn and a European I am shocked.” (IH2) She also does not share values that Russian women

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<sup>3</sup> *Ryssä* is a derogatory term used for Russian speakers in Finland

have: “For them the most important thing is money, to find a rich husband and you need to do nothing after that.” (IH2).

On the other hand, she states that the Russian culture affected her strongly because of her mother and she likes the openness and warmth of Russian people. She has close ties with her relatives from Russia unlike with the Finnish ones. In Finnish culture, she appreciates punctuality and reliability. Therefore, she chooses and combines features that are appealing to her from both cultures and “it turns out to be some new culture” (IH2), she notices laughing. This is the reason why she is close with those who have a similar background: “You know, they are the same as me. They came when they were little. We sometimes speak Russian, sometimes Finnish. I feel that they are my people.” (IH2)

She shares the same feeling with other foreigners as they are able to understand her. Interestingly, she notices shifts when talking to people from different backgrounds:

I might be a bit more formal with Finns; I do not show much my personality and I have a distance with them. It is different with Russians: you can hug and kiss. So you have two roles. But it is normal; you are always a bit different with different people. Cultures are different. (IH2)

When travelling to Russia, she feels as a stranger there: “Maybe my mentality is more Finnish.” (IH1) However, she does not choose between two cultures:

I don't suffer that I don't have a real nationality. I do not have like: “Oh, Russia” or “Oh, Finland”. I quite critically perceive both countries and I do not want to be only Russian or only Finnish. I would say that I am European. (IH2)

She does not neglect the fact of being part of both cultures and something in between. Moreover, she chooses a more suitable concept for her: being European. She rejects the very notion of tying to one cultural orientation; she constantly analyses, compares them and accepts certain features from both.

### 5.1.8 Interviewee K

The interviewee was born in Finland and has a Russian mother and a Finnish father. Since childhood she has been used to be both with Finnish and Russian people and a bilingual environment has not been something special for her:

I was growing up in a society when my father had Finnish friends, my mother mingled with Russian people. I knew their children and many of them also spoke Russian and Finnish. (IK)

This situation remains until today and she has both Finnish and Russian friends although she notices that she might have more Russian friends grown up in Finland due to the fact that they share the same background: “They are half Finnish, half Russian and we initially found a common language.” (IK) The saying “to find a common language” is widely used in Russian and it means mutual understanding. The common ground for getting along with these people was a similar background and the Russian language. “I think it is from childhood. Children usually stick to those who are similar to them”, she reflects.

She introduces herself as a Russian or Finnish depending on the situation and possible outcomes it might bring:

I strategize. If I need, I do not say that I am Russian. If it is beneficial for me I can say that I speak Russian. If, for example, I apply for a job and I know that on some level...of course, in Finland the theme of racism is developed so that everyone can get a job, but I usually strategize and if there is a danger if I say that I am half Russian, then I usually do not say. Later on in another stage I can say that I am bilingual and half Russian. But nobody would guess that I am, some people do not even know. (IK)

Describing her choice, she uses the verb “тактиковать” (strategize–my translation). She forms it from a noun “тактика” i.e. tactics and strategy. She refers to this strategy further on in the interview when talking about introducing to other people. She states that she feels

both Russian and Finnish, however she notices that in most cases when being asked, she answers that she is Finnish because she was born and grew up in Finland.

She feels at home in Finland, however she cannot say the same about Russia: “I do not belong there.” (IK) She is used to the way things are in Finland and gives an example of going to the store in Russia. These everyday situations make her feel “out of ease” and such environment seems foreign for her:

[...] Russian sales people are all rude, it is impossible to agree on something with them. [...] I am used to normal service, in a Finnish way. In Russia I had problematic situations because of it. I do not like it. (IK)

She finds Russian and Finnish mentality distinct. According to her, it is a consequence of the way children are raised, foci that schools give, “that is why the topics of conversations young people have are different.” “I feel the difference”, she adds. In this context she feels more similar to Finnish people: “They are closer to me.” (IK) However, she feels comfortable with those Russians who were born or raised in Finland calling them “a separate caste” emphasizing their special nature and difference from Finns and Russians grown up in Russia.

She contrasts two cultures when describing them:

In Finnish culture I like that people are open and honest. If they speak, they speak directly. Russians can lie and say something in a different way, play against someone. Finns are not. They are honest. In Russian culture I like probably their warmth, atmosphere, table feasts. In Russian culture there are more traditions. (IK)

She also sees Russians more superficial meaning that they pay more attention to what someone wears and how he or she lives: “They can be a bit superficial. They need to show off.” (IK) She appreciates features from both cultures. Honesty and straightforwardness of Finns are appealing to her. Referring to Russians, she uses the word “душевность” the

analogue of which can be warmth, warm heartedness. This word is formed from the word “душа” – soul. Soul is a very important concept in Russian culture. It is often assumed to be untranslatable to other languages. This concept is discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. Belonging to both cultures is seen as an advantage for her and allows having a wider perspective on things and avoiding biased views.

She recalls the stories from some of her friends having been torn between cultures and having difficulties to understand what their motherland is, but unlike them it does not appear to be an issue for her:

My situation probably was eased because I was born here. I have never lived in Russia. And my motherland is Finland. I after all consider myself more Finnish but I also have a Russian side of me. (IK)

Therefore, she feels comfortable with her belonging to both cultures and does not have a need to prove anything to anyone: “I feel good, I am as I am. Nobody offends me. Everybody loves me.” (IK)

#### 5.1.9 Interviewee L

The interviewee was brought to Finland at the age of two and a half. Her family moved under the repatriation programme. She does not remember much from her early years but relying on her mother’s stories she says that she learnt Finnish in the kindergarden and by the time she went to school she could speak it fluently. She has more precise memories about the time at school:

I have always been very sociable and active, could find a common language with people. I was lucky, nobody was insulting me, and I did not have to hear ryssä. I know it happened to some of my friends but never to me. I do not know why. Instead, I was always proud of being Russian even when I was little. (IL)

Even though she calls Finland her motherland, she regards herself as Russian. She justifies it by the way she was brought up, how she perceives and reacts on certain things:

My mother always took me everywhere: gymnastics, dancing classes, swimming pool. The same way how it is done in Russia: everything and everywhere. I began reading very early too. (IL)

She finds this way of bringing up children very Russian. She also emphasises the importance of the Russian language which she likes more than Finnish and finds it “richer.”(IL) Her parents were worried about her forgetting Russian thus they were “working on it” (IL). She recalls that her grandmother was reading her Pushkin and made her write in Russian. “You cannot be lazy and let your children respond in Finnish” (IL), she adds.

Commenting on her orientation towards Russian culture, she states: “I imposed to myself the idea that I am Russian. And I feel comfortable with this thought.” (IL) She explains this attachment with the continuous interest in the Russian culture and history which has always fascinated her. She feels and behaves the same both with Finnish and Russian people and openly demonstrates her Russian habits in the Finnish environment:

I could knock the wood, spit over the shoulder, take the empty bottle from the table...Finns might look at me strangely like “what are you doing?” I will explain and still do it. (IL)

She knows these Russian superstitions and implements them in everyday life even though they are not common in Finnish culture. She is not afraid to look strange. She finds Russian and Finnish mentalities distinct and although she feels comfortable with both, she states: “Russians understand me better, how I do things, how I react. That is why it is easier to be with them for me.” (IL) She likes Russian traditions and gives an example of celebrating birthdays:

Here when you invite for your birthday, Finns come without presents with their drinks, sit on the sofa and drink their beer. When we have a celebration, we lay the table, guests are coming with presents, and you sit and talk...I do know how to say... I like it better this way. (IL)

The way of doing things common for Russian culture is still kept by some Russians living in Finland. However, she points out different circles or groups of Russians in Finland: “There are also those who just drink beer and sit on the benches.” (IL) Such groups do not integrate and detach themselves from Finnish society. Unlike them, she and her friends have Finnish friends, like Finland and positively perceive the Finnish culture. Describing her experience of being in Russia, she argues that she feels Russian there too and very often does not admit that she lives in Finland when asked.

The very fact of being part of both cultures she finds beneficial as it gives her a dual perspective and better understanding of things. According to her, it is a great advantage for her career. Moreover, she is protective about both cultures and if she hears something negative, she would defend:

Once we were on the boat to Saint Petersburg and I heard Finns talking bad about Russians. Everything was boiling in me. I felt like turning and asking them what the hell then they are going there. [...] I would do the same about Finns. (IL)

Throughout the interview she has claimed several times of being and feeling Russian: “Maybe I want to be a bit more Russian than Finnish.” (IL) However, she does not neglect her Finnish side and admits that abroad she very often positions herself as a Finn, because “probably I do not want to confuse people” (IL). The interviewee has expressed a great interest in the research topic and mentioned that it has been discussed and reflected widely among her friends.

## 5.2 Cross-comparison: Thematic Analysis

The main concepts and themes are delineated across the interviews. The most important ones are presented in detail in the following discussion. The purpose of this analysis is not to make generalizations but to review different cases and compare them in order to understand what is behind these stories and experiences.

### 5.2.1 Bilingualism and Language Orientation

All interviewees are bilingual if we apply a broader of understanding of bilingualism (Butler and Hakuta 2004: 115). As born and raised in Finland, their Finnish skills have a native level. However, their Russian language proficiencies differ. Three of the interviewees have a noticeable accent in Russian and at times require some time to find a suitable word in Russian or then substitute it with a Finnish or an English word. The discrepancy in the level of Russian skills can be explained by the frequency they have communicated with Russian speaking people and in some cases by the rejection of speaking Russian when growing up:

I use Russian now only with my mother. I mostly speak Finnish. (IG)

[...] I sometimes switch to Finnish because it is difficult for me in Russian.  
(IH1)

As described in the previous chapter, the denial to speak one of the languages can be explained by many factors (Romaine 1995: 238). In this case, the wish to be accepted by the peers and negative attitudes towards the Russian speaking community influenced the decision of these interviewees not to speak Russian when growing up:



Sometimes when walking with my mom and she started speaking Russian, I was telling her that we should speak Finnish, as we are from Finland. (IH1)

I think I was in fifth grade and I did not want anybody to hear that she speaks to me in Russian. (IC2)

Being bilingual is regarded as an advantage and highly appreciated by all interviewees. Due to the constant development of relations between Russia and Finland, they believe that knowing two languages is beneficial for their career and growth. However, some interviewees have demonstrated a clear orientation towards one cultural frame and language. This also emerges in the context of raising children in the future:

If we speak about priorities, first of all I want them [children, my comment] to know Finnish. [...] Finnish is a bit more important for me. (IA)

I speak Finnish only at school and work. Everywhere else I speak Russian. I have only Russian friends. (IF)

I like Russian more, it is richer. There are more words. (IL)

For one of the participants the language also serves as a tool to prove that she belongs to the Finnish society. By using idioms or interesting expressions, she wants to impress Finns and therefore demonstrate that she is a part of the Finnish society.

Most of the interviewees do not define the language of their inner thoughts. The language choice depends on the situation and the people they are thinking about. Some participants due to their language and cultural attachment or a habit, claim to think either in Finnish or Russian. Interestingly, some associate Russian language with dreams and emotions. They themselves explain it by being close to their mothers or having Russian as their first language. Most of the participants grew up in a bilingual environment from an early age and attended Russian-Finnish kindergardens and schools where teaching was in both languages and allowed them to learn to write and read in Russian too.

As the cultures are distinct, the way of doing things might differ and behaviour shifting might take place as was discussed in the theoretical section. This phenomenon was largely described in a number of theories. It is called cultural frame switching by Hong et al. (2000), or cross-cultural code switching by Molinsky 2007. Ting-Toomey & Kurogi (1998) describes it in face negotiation theory. Adler (1998: 225–245) calls it a psychocultural adaptation, when a person adjusts to specific norms and behaviour depending on situation and context. Pavlenko (2006: 26) explains this change as induced by languages because they might create different worlds and shape person's behaviour. However, she notices this does not occur in all individuals. There are few examples:

I am more reserved with Finnish people, I do not joke so much. It is easier for me to joke in Russian. (IC2)

When I speak Russian I feel probably a bit more comfortable. Even though, Finnish is my mother tongue, when I speak Finnish, I try to make an impression. In Russian I can speak whatever sometimes inserting Finnish words. (IA2)

I might be a bit more reserved with Finns, do not show that much my personality. With Finnish people it is different, you need to keep the distance; with Russians you can hug and kiss. It is normal, the cultures are different, and interaction is different. [ ] You take this role: now you are with Finns so you need to behave as them, then you are with Russians. So you have two personalities. (IH2)

Even though they are bilingual and Finnish is their native language, they perceive the difference when speaking Russian. This is reflected not only on the language level itself but how they feel. This behavioural shifting is not difficult and occurs unconsciously, “you just shift it in your head” (IH2). However, some of the participants claim no differences in their behaviour when interacting with Russian or Finnish speaking people:

I do not have to change myself; I am not trying to adjust. (IL)

Probably not, I guess one has to ask my friends about it. (IK)

### 5.2.2 Childhood Memories and Facing Prejudices

Three of the participants were born in Finland; the others moved to Finland at an early age, from the age of two and a half to nine years old. Childhood memories and experiences vary among these individuals. Eight participants of the study do not recall being bullied or insulted for being Russian. All of them are aware of existing stereotypes and prejudices towards Russians but have not faced them extensively:

There was a problem just once with one girl who was a foreigner herself. Nothing like that from Finns. (IK)

I have not really faced. They do not care about your roots if you speak good Finnish. (IC)

Some interviewees pointed out a cautious attitude towards them when there were not so many foreigners in Finland and people were a bit afraid. In addition, the old generation could remember the war and other negative historical events.

This attitude consciously or unconsciously affected younger generations of Finns in their perception of Russians and as Sabatier states (2008: 188–189), facing discrimination during childhood can produce different results, specifically, rejecting or strengthening an ethnic identity. There is a specific derogative term of calling Russians in Finland: “Ryssä”. It is considered to be very offensive. One of the interviewees recalls being called “ryssä” which brings her bad memories. She refused speaking Russian and was ashamed to claim that she is half Russian. From her experience, in order to be accepted by her peers she had to lie that she is 100% Finn. Another participant also remembers a similar situation. She asked her mother not to speak Russian in front of other children. Applying Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1986) an individual is looking for a positive social identity. Caused by stereotypes and general prejudices about the Russian speaking community which often occurs in intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner 1986: 13), individuals in the search of a positive status might move towards the more attractive one. Another example was the

interviewee who was choosing to introduce herself depending on the situation (see Interviewee K). Moreover, Stephan & Stephan (1999: 32), who analyse identity in interaction and in intercultural setting, refer to Threat Theory when conflict history, ignorance and prejudices affect relations between two groups. As it has been admitted, there are certain prejudices caused by neighbouring location and history of Russia and Finland.

The way the participants were raised differs. In the families where a father was Finn and a mother Russian, traditions, holidays and habits of both countries were maintained. Many, however, mention that as a mother usually participates more in raising children, they may say that they were raised more in a Russian way and are very close with Russian relatives. One might assume that in the families where both parents are Russian, children would be brought up according to Russian traditions. It is a case in four interviews out of five of the current research. A different situation was observed with an interviewee who claimed that her parents tried to bring her up as a Finn (see interview A). By this she means that they did not look for ties with Russian families and celebrated only Finnish holidays. According to her, they succeed in it more than they could expect as she feels very Finnish. However, she notices that parents always spoke Russian and watched Russian television at home.

In relation to watching Russian TV and movies, one of the respondents indicates nostalgic feelings that children of immigrants might have (see interview B). It is caused by their parents' stories about the years when they were young but also by watching old Soviet movies. This gave her an ideal picture of Russia which goes away when travelling there. Other participants have not referred about nostalgic feelings of Russia, however, many remember summers spending at their grandmother's places in the childhood.

None of the interviewees claim to face any kind of prejudices now. According to them, it is very much associated with their strong Finnish skills:

I speak Finnish very well. There is not any negative attitude towards me. [...] It means a lot if you speak Finnish as Finns, they do not care if you have other roots. (IC1)

My Finnish is very strong so Finnish people do not notice that I am Russian. (IB1)

Finns perceive me as a Finn. I speak like them, think like them. So it is hard to say if there is racism. (IH2)

Moreover, as it has been mentioned earlier, the Russian language is considered as an advantage for the future career. However, one of the participants began questioning if her Russian last name matters when applying for jobs in Finland. She refers to discrimination and the “special attitude” (IB2) towards Russians. This thought came to her mind after watching a documentary about racism in Finland. She argues that she has not started a serious process of job hunting and before it was not an issue to find a summer job. Another interviewee strategizes about her being Russian. She is saying that being Russian might positively or negatively affect when applying for a job, as an example, thus one should strategize.

Due to the fact that there are many tourists in Finland and business between these two countries is growing, there is a need for Russian speakers. According to the respondents, Finns also understand that Russians bring money and invest in Finland which is seen as a positive thing and attitude and perceptions of Russians have been changing.

### 5.2.3 Contrasting Mentalities

All interviewees perceive differences between Russian and Finnish people. These perceptions are stereotypical and naturally formed in intergroup relations which are directed on only towards other groups but in-group as well (Turner 1982). Certain features from both cultures are appealing to the interviewees, others they find unacceptable and do not want to be associated with them. The table below reflects the most common features in

their descriptions of Russian and Finnish people. Some of them are described as contrasting characteristics; the others are presented separate as peculiar characteristics observed by the interviewees:

**Table 4.** Summary of cultural Russian and Finnish features described by interviewees

<b>Russian features</b>	<b>Finnish features</b>
Openness and warmth	Reserved nature
Avoiding rules and laws	Law obedience
Status orientation	Reliability and honesty
Spontaneity	Deliberation and calmness

- Openness and warmth vs. reserved nature

Participants attribute openness and warmth to Russian culture. They clarify what they mean by giving examples of meeting people and making friends:

I think I am more open, I tell more about myself, I get to know people faster, I get close to people. I hug, smile. I can make compliments. (IG)

You can meet someone Russian and next day you already could go to the movies. With Finns, it is slow; friendship is building bit by bit. (IH)

Finns are portrayed as reserved people. Unlike Russians, they are difficult to make friends with and the process itself takes longer. The participants describe it from different perspectives. One of the interviewees critically depicts the reserved nature of Finns which makes her “hold off from such people” (IF). She wants to detach herself from Finns who are not like her. In contrast, another interviewee does not consider this feature as negative. Instead she points out that by withdrawing Finns give others some space, “let others

express themselves” (IA1). In addition, she indicates differences between regions in Finland and finds Eastern Finns more similar to Russians in nature.

Referring to the warmth of Russian culture, some interviewees describe traditions of celebrating holidays, inviting guests at home:

In Russian culture I like probably their warmth, atmosphere, table feasts. In Russian culture there are more traditions than in Finnish. (IK)

Here when you invite for your birthday, Finns come without presents with their drinks, sit on the sofa and drink their beer. When we have a celebration, we lay the table, guests are coming with presents, and you sit and talk...I do know how to say... I like better this way. (IL)

- Law obedience vs. avoiding rules and laws

From the perspective of following rules, one of the participants critically describes the Russian way of doing things: “Russians can be vulgar, try to avoid rules and laws the same how it is done in Russia. I would not like to accept this.” (ID)

He does not share this attitude and refuse to accept it. Other two interviewees compare Russia and Finland and emphasise that “everything works in Finland the way it should be” (IB1) and appreciate the Finnish way of life, meaning an order and following rules. Another interviewee also refers to the Finnish quality of following rules and laws but from a different angle. According to her, Finn’s law obedience does not allow them to resolve the situation fast when something is out of order: “A Finn starts thinking how to resolve it according to the rules. A Russian has a wit, relies on intuition and finds a solution faster.” (IC2)

- Reliability and honesty

Many participants positively characterize Finnish people as honest and reliable. They like Finnish directness and honesty:

You can always rely on them. (IH1)

In Finnish culture I like that people are open and honest. If they speak, they speak directly. Russians can lie and say something in a different way, play against someone. Finns are not. They are honest. (IK)

These qualities bring feelings of safety and reliability, which are appreciated by the interviewees: “You know what to expect from Finns. I like them.” (IB1)

- Status orientation

According to one of the participants of the current research, Russians value the status and care what one wears and how he or she looks:

When I was just myself, sometimes it was not accepted. Generally Russian mentality implies more expectations and you need to follow those expectations. (IB2)

She goes further with an argument giving an example of her mother who is preoccupied about her daughter’s career and status. According to her, life has to be planned and lead to a certain expected level. Another interviewee supports this argument and calls Russians a bit superficial: “They need to show off. Finns do not need it. They do not care what you wear, how you live.” (IK)

Described more as a negative feature, this however, according to one of the interviewees, explains the sense of pride that Russians have:

Russians like to make themselves special and proud. Finns do not. If my house is better than my neighbour’s, shame on me. [...] A Russian person



has different life scopes, dreams...Maybe because Russians have more self-belief. (IB2)

She develops this statement by saying that historically Russians have always had this sense of pride to be Russian. She also states that a new generation of Finns is different which might imply that the sense of pride and high self-esteem can also be observed among Finns.

- Spontaneity vs. deliberation

These two characteristics are not contrasting in a sense that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, in the current research in the context of comparing Russian and Finnish mentalities, I present them as opposite features. Here are some examples from the interviewees describing these personal traits:

In the way that I am calm and prone to deliberate, maybe I am more Finnish. (IB1)

You need to agree on meetings with Finns. I do not understand it sometimes. With Russians you can just call and ask: "hey! I will come over, where are you now? Finns are not so spontaneous. (IC2)

- Russian soul

Some respondents introduce the concept of the Russian soul when describing their own identity:

I am a bit more Finnish, but my soul is Russian. (IG)

- What I like in the Russian people and it is hard to explain to a non-Russian person, it is concept of the Russian soul

-What is it?

-It is something that exists but hard to explain. (IB2)

Another interviewee uses the word “дух” but both “дух” (spirit) and “душа” (soul) are cognate words in the Russian language. She states: “I took after my mother. I am brave. I have this Russian spirit from my mother.” (IL)

The respondents do not provide any explanation on what they understand by Russian soul or Russian spirit. One can say that it is associated with the aspiration to be special as the Russian soul is often described as unique, enigmatic, spiritual and deep. What comprises its distinctive nature if we assume that there is one?

It is important to acknowledge that there is no unified explanation of the notion of the Russian soul; and scholars, historians and researchers try to interpret it from different perspectives, focusing on religious, historical, cultural and literary aspects. According to Allic et al. (2011: 374), the Russian society has been largely shaped by the Russian Orthodox Church which negatively portrays aspirations to money and prosperity and by this enhances spiritual aspects of life. Another argument relies on the debate about the nation’s development from Slavophiles’ and Westernizers’ perspectives (Kim 2008: 97). The notion of the Russian soul is also often found and reflected in the Russian literature where melancholy, spirituality, self-sacrifice, fatalism and indolence are delineated as characteristics of Russian national mentality and soul (Allic et al. 2011: 375).

All of the interviewees pointed out the differences between Russian and Finnish mentalities. Moreover, they are aware of such differences and most of them find them compatible due to the fact that they were either born or raised in Finland and know both cultures quite good. One of the participants describing relations between her Russian mother and Finnish father notices that for them it was difficult to understand each other and after being married for many years there is no complete understanding.

#### 5.2.4 Sense of Belonging

The sense of belonging is a central question of the current research and in the context of immigration it is particularly complex. Can we consider the respondents bicultural? All of the interviewees can be considered bilingual but this does not necessarily imply a bicultural nature. Applying Bicultural Identity Integration Index (Benet Martinez & Haritatos 2005), most of our interviewees can be considered to be high BII individuals. They admit the presence of both a Russian and a Finnish side in their personality and find them compatible. However, the current study includes one example of a low BII individual (See interview F). The person neglects the Finnish cultural aspect of her identity and chooses an orientation towards the Russian culture only.

According to Phinney & Devich-Navarro's categorization (1997), individuals who reject being part of both cultures cannot be defined as biculturals. They are only two types of bicultural individuals: blended and alternating. The current research provides examples of both. In the case of a blended type, the individuals enjoy being part of both cultures and find it beneficial to have a dual identity and position themselves in-between. The alternating individuals move between two cultures and they are more aware of possible conflicts between two cultures. In Phinney & Devich-Navarro's study, the alternating individuals have a strong affiliation with their ethnic culture. The context of the current work is different and the concept of ethnicity is not that relevant here. Thus for the current work, alternative biculturalism implies a strong attachment with one of the cultures and moving between the two frames depending on the context.

Here are some examples of the individuals who express a clear orientation towards one culture without neglecting their "other side" (alternating biculturals):

I consider myself Finnish. (IA2). Finland stays priority. (IA1)

**BUT**

of course I understand that I have a lot of Russianness in myself. (IA1)

I am a bit more Finnish.  
**BUT**  
 my soul is Russian. (IG)

I, after all, consider myself more Finnish  
**BUT**  
 I also have a Russian side of me. (IK)

I imposed to myself the idea that I am Russian. And I feel comfortable with this thought  
**BUT**  
 when I am abroad, I very often say that I am from Finland. (IL)

Along with those who expressed their stronger affiliation with one of the cultures, there are interviewees who admit their belonging to both cultures without tying themselves to one (blended biculturals):

I am something between. I am like 50/50. (IB1)

I am sort of between. (IC1, IC2)

I have something both from Russia and Finland but to feel in both countries completely at home is impossible. (ID)

Within this Finnish-Russian cultural frame, they position themselves in-between. In the first example, the interviewee points out that there is no need to determine a motherland. According to her home is not a geographical place but the people around. She states that she “might not have a strong cultural belonging” (IB2) and she recalls her mother’s saying to her that “she does not have a motherland” (IB2) which is not perceived as something negative. The interviewee positions herself as a multicultural to avoid being tied to one of the cultures. The last example indicates that despite of being part of both cultures he does not have a feeling of “home” in neither of them which is not perceived as something negative either.

Interestingly, comparing themselves with Finns and Russians grown up Russia, they feel special. They perceive the difference both with Finnish people and Russians grown up in Russia. Thus, many of them have friends of similar backgrounds:

You know, they are the same as me. They came when they were little. We sometimes speak Russian, sometimes Finnish. I feel that they are my people. (IH2)

They are half Finnish, half Russian and we initially found a common language. (IL)

Moreover, one of the interviewees defines Russians living in Finland as a “special caste” (IK), outlining their distinctive character. Another interviewee also feels special:

When I am with Finns, I differ from them, when I am with Russians who are from Russia, then I am different from them too. Yes, I am special (laughing). (IC2)

This feeling of being special is a result of belonging to both cultures which “turns out to be some new culture.” (IH2) “I am one of them but I am different” perception takes place among such individuals.

Using Phinney & Devich-Navarro’s terminology, there is an example of a separated individual. Having a Finnish father and a Russian mother, this interviewee states that she considers herself as Russian. She dislikes everything associated with Finnish culture and negatively describes their personality:

I do not feel that I am a Finn.

I do not want to stay here.

I do not think I am Finnish.

I try not to say that I am Finnish. (IF)

Such an attitude, according to her, can be explained by her distinctive character. However, she points out that when travelling to Russia she experiences the feeling that she does not belong there either. Without admitting her being Finnish, she defines herself as European:

I think that I am European. If I travel to Russia or Europe I try not to say that I am Finnish. I'd rather be European than Finnish. (IF)

The concept of European identity appears in another interview but in a different context:

I don't suffer that I don't have a real nationality. I do not have like: "Oh, Russia" or "Oh, Finland". I quite critically perceive both Finland and Russia and I do not want to be Russian or Finnish. I would say that I am European. (IH2)

This is not a case of marginal identity as one might assume. She admits having both cultures as part of her identity. But she does not need to tie herself to one of the cultures or choose between them.

Two interviewees of the current research claim to have a European identity. They prefer to be rather European than Finnish or Russian. In the first example, European identity is chosen to exclude and oppose the Finnish side. Between being Finnish and Russian, she identifies herself as Russian, however when travelling, she becomes aware of the fact that she does not belong there either. In the second case, the respondent chooses a European identity to avoid being biased and attaching herself to one of the cultures. She explains this fact by her critical and realistic understanding of both countries. She also notices that she feels at ease with people with similar backgrounds, meaning not only of Russian and Finnish origin but other nationalities. Therefore, in such a context the European identity means a broader scope referring her belonging to a global community. In the case of a multicultural identity, the interviewee says: "I am proud of what I am regardless of cultures. I can call myself multicultural." (IB2) This form of identity can be regarded as integrated

biculturalism or intercultural identity described in the work of Roccas and Brewer (2002: 92–93).

### 5.3 Summary

Nine interviews were carried out for this research and analysed using a holistic content analysis (Lieblich et al. 2002) and a thematic analysis (Riessman 2008). The focus was on the individuals' understanding of their identity in regards of being displaced between two cultural frames. All participants have at least one Russian parent and speak fluent Russian. The relevance of the Russian language is affirmed as the language constitutes one of the core cultural values (Smolisz 1999: 119). The interviewees are bilingual, however, their proficiencies in Russian vary as well as their attitudes towards the language. Some interviews give the preferences towards the Finnish language, some to Russian, while others equally appreciate both. Furthermore, they all believe that knowing Russian nowadays is beneficial for their careers as well as for better understanding of people with different background.

While growing up in Finland, some interviewees faced prejudices from the larger population. They explain it by negative attitudes towards Russians which is associated with historical past between two countries. Two of the interviewees reported about their rejection to speak Russian as they wanted to be accepted in early years by their peers.

Eight interviewees can be considered bicultural, according to bicultural variations described by Benet-Martínez & Haritatos (2005). They affirm their dual identity but differ in their cultural orientation. One of the interviewees rejects her Finnish side and acknowledges only the Russian one. Thus she belongs to the group of separated individuals. The concept of European and multicultural identity occurs as well. However, their understanding also varies. In the first example, the choice of a European identity is based on the interviewee's

rejection of Finnish culture. In two other examples, the interviewees use the incorporated understanding of identity when belonging to a certain culture does not seem relevant anymore (Roccas & Brewer 2002: 92–93). They see themselves as European and multicultural and want to be part of a global society.



## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The current work has set the objective to explore the perceptions of identity of 1.5G and 2G Russian immigrants in Finland, specifically how they make sense of their experiences and understand who they are in regard to their cultural orientations. For this purpose, this qualitative research was carried out. The most important identity-related theories were discussed. Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with adult children of Russian immigrants. All of them were raised in Finland and have at least one Russian parent. Applying a holistic and thematic narrative analysis, these interviews were analysed and the findings were presented. All interviewees are bilingual and the interviews were conducted in Russian.

As the findings show, all the interviewees have questioned their identity in regards of their cultural belonging. Being bicultural can have both negative and positive sides, and the interviewees have had different experiences when growing up. Some of the interviewees were born in Russia and when they came to Finland they did not speak the Finnish language. In some cases, it has not been an issue; however, some of the interviews recall negative memories. These negative memories are also associated with not being accepted by their Finnish peers because of the Russian origin. However, none of them reports about negative attitudes towards them now. During childhood and adolescence most of them questioned their identity and felt the necessity to understand who they in relation to their cultural duality.

Eight of the interviewees can be considered bicultural. They acknowledge their dual belonging and recognise the differences between cultures. However, the attitudes and their orientation towards cultures vary. Some position themselves in-between (blended individuals), others have closer ties with one of the cultures without neglecting another one (alternative individuals). There is an example of a separated individual. Two individuals also identify themselves through a European identity, another one defines herself as

multicultural. Eight out of nine individuals positively reflect on their cultural duality and find it beneficial to be bilingual and bicultural. It is not difficult for them to combine these identities; however some of the interviewees notice behaviour shifting when interacting with representatives from these cultures. Others do not admit this and state that they stay the same regardless who they talk to.

I have not known eight respondents before conducting interviews. There were some difficulties to get insight of possible sensitive issues that the interviewees might have experienced. Thus, follow-up interviews were very much helpful as after the first contact, the interviewees appeared to be more open and described their experiences more emotionally.

The current study has a focus on adult children of Russian immigrants. The number of conducted interviews was nine, but due to their qualitative and narrative nature, they have provided relevant findings. However, in order to gain more general findings, the larger sample of further research should be used. Moreover, the gender factor might also be considered which was not taken into account in the research. A further study might also cover the perspective of both children and parents thus the experiences and views from both sides could complement the picture.

As the research showed, there are many variations in individuals grown up in a country different from their parents' country of origin. The process of how individuals construct their identity and navigate their dual belonging is complex and many factors affect it. This study presents a small sample of experiences of bicultural individuals in the Russian-Finnish context and creates a foundation for further research on 1.5G and 2G Russian immigrants in Finland.

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## Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. Could you tell me about your childhood?

Complementary questions:

Where were you born?

What age have you been brought to Finland?

What memories do you have from Russia (in case of having been born in Russia?) and what memories do you have from the time when you moved to Finland?

Расскажи мне о своем детстве?

Сопровождающие вопросы:

Где ты родился?

В каком возрасте твоя семья переехала в Россию?

Какие воспоминания у тебя остались о том времени, когда ты жил в России (если жил) и когда переехал в Финляндию?

2. When do you use Russian/Finnish and why?

Complementary question:

In what language do you think when you are alone?

Когда ты используешь русский и финский языки? Почему?

Сопровождающий вопрос:

На каком языке ты думаешь, когда находишься один/ одна?

3. Finland has a big amount of Russian immigrants. Certain stereotypes and prejudices exist within society. Have you ever experienced prejudices toward you? What do you think about it?

В Финляндии много русских иммигрантов и существуют различные стереотипы и предубеждения. Сталкивался ли ты когда-нибудь с предвзятым отношением к тебе?

Что ты думаешь об этом?

4. What culture do you identify yourself with?

Complementary questions:

Have you ever faced the situation when you have felt as an outsider?

Do you feel Russian/Finnish, when and why?

If you travel to Russia, how do you feel there?

С какой культурой ты отождествляешь себя?

Сопровождающие вопросы:

Возникала ли когда-нибудь ситуация, что ты чувствовал/а себя чужим/чужой?

Чувствуешь ли ты себя русским, финном. Когда и почему?

Как ты чувствуешь себя в России, если ты путешествуешь туда?

5. What does think about Russian and Finnish cultures?

Complementary questions:

How different are cultures, mentality? Is it difficult to combine?

What does it mean for you to belong to both?

How do you think belonging to both cultures impact your life?

Что ты думаешь о русской и финской культурах?

Сопросождающие вопросы:

Насколько разные культуры, менталитеты? Вызывает сложность их совмещать?

Что значит для тебя-принадлежать к обеим культурам?

Как принадлежность к двум культурам влияет на твою жизнь?

6. How would you raise your children?

Как бы тебе хотелось воспитать своих детей?

Appendix 2. Advertisement in VKontakte

From 13.12.2013

Добрый день!

Я пишу диплом в Финляндии и для моего исследования мне необходимы люди, которые родились или выросли в Финляндии, но при этом имеют русских родителей (хотя бы одного). Я провожу интервью по скайпу, займет минут тридцать. Исследование посвящено теме культурной идентичности. Заранее спасибо.

С уважением,

Татьяна

Hello,

I am writing my thesis in Finland and for my research I am looking for people born or raised in Finland but have at least one Russian parent. I conduct interviews via Skype and it takes about thirty minutes. The research theme is dedicated to cultural identity. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Tatiana