

# Religious Life of Russian Immigrants in Finland.

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Russian immigrants are one of the biggest ethnic minorities in Finland. Most of them moved to country during last 30 years. Russian community live peaceful open life, building connections to Finnish society through marriages, work communications, social projects, cultural integration. However, like any other immigrants all over the world they face many challenges of new life circumstances, for example, difficult local language, prejudices in the society, unemployment, stress, feeling of loneliness.</p> <p>After analysing the previous research, I saw that Russian immigrants as a group is understudied. The aim of my thesis work was to collect and analyse new data on religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland and find out if a church/ mosque/ other religious organisation can provide support for immigrants.</p> <p>Twenty-five interviews were conducted in spring and autumn of 2018. I met twenty of the respondents in person and taped our conversations. Five respondents were able to answer my questions in written form. Interviews were conducted in Russian language and included forty questions. The target group of the research were Russian immigrants (20-30), who moved to Finland during last three-five years.</p> <p>The research method my worked is based on was conducting the interviews and analysing their outcomes. I used simple tables system, filling them with simplified short version of replies. I applied coding and scoring method. I also explored relevant literature (books, reports, articles, etc.), statistic data and previous researches.</p> <p>My thesis work includes Introduction, six chapters, Conclusion, Bibliography and Appendix. I referred to the theory of professor John Berry on four stages of acculturation, to the theory of seven stages of assimilation by American sociologist Milton Gordon, to the studies of Professor of University of Oslo Pål Kolstø who investigated Russian diasporas in different countries, and to the previous researches in the sphere.</p> <p>I present my research findings and analysis and also refer to the extra interviews I conducted during my research. In the Conclusion part of my thesis I present the key findings of my research and formulate some recommendations to the religious organisations upon the work with Russian immigrants.</p>		
<p>Keywords</p> <p>Russian immigrants, Russian diaspora, integration, self-identification, religion and immigration</p>		

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## 1. Introduction.

World globalization we are facing today is a complicated process. The movement of people is a significant part of it. All the immigrants have number of various reasons to leave their own countries, but they all get into vulnerable position of a stranger or a newcomer in the new society. The ultimate dream of any immigrant is to find a better life and feel at home in the country they have chosen to stay in. “Home” often serves as metaphor for a familiar territory and activity, an embodiment of a place where one feels safe and comfortable. Yet almost inevitably immigration is associated with the feeling of loss, being in separation with family and friends, inability to conduct a habitual way of life, or speak one’s native language. Integration is never easy – an immigrant needs to find a perfect balance between assimilating into new society and not losing one’s own identity.

Russian speakers are the second biggest language minority in Finland (after Swedish speakers) and includes more than 79 thousand of people. Most of them name the Russian Federation as their homeland<sup>1</sup>. Others were born in Estonia and other former republics of the USSR. A great part of Russian immigrants moved to country during last 30 years. Local population got used to Russian language spoken on the streets or in public transport. Russian community live mostly peaceful open life, building connections to Finnish society through marriages, work communications, social projects, and cultural integration<sup>2</sup>.

The recent European refugee crises of 2014-2016 has shocked Finland. During few months more than 30 thousand of immigrants from the Middle East entered the country seeking for the asylum. Most of these new coming refugees were Muslims. The difference in cultural norms and religious traditions brought up some tension in the society. Politicians, journalists, academic world focused their attention on studying Islam, learning more about possible ways of peaceful communication with the new comers and helping them to integrate into society. In these new circumstances Russian immigrants at some point became almost ‘invisible’, no longer being in the limelight.

I decided to fill the gap in the studies and focus my attention on religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland. The aim of my thesis work was to find out what is the religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland and how they practice it (if they do). Interviewing people and data analysis became the main method of my research. I have formulated a list of forty

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk\\_vaesto\\_en.html](https://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto_en.html)

<sup>2</sup> Leskinen A., Karvonen I. Russian-speaking minority in the past, today and in the future

questions, which covered topics of family background, life experience in Finland and own religious views, needs and practices.

Twenty-five interviews were conducted in spring and autumn of 2018. I met twenty of the respondents in person and taped our conversations. Five respondents were able to answer my questions in written form. The language of all interviews was Russian. All the respondents said that they prefer sharing some personal information only in Russian, so they could be sure they would be understood correctly, and that speaking Russian is still more comfortable for them. None of the questions had suggested multiple choice. Respondents were asked to give free replies. Some questions could have simple yes/no answer, others supposed to have more detailed reply.

The research was both theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part included exploring relevant literature (books, reports, articles, etc.), statistic data, and previous researches. Observation of the previous studies and researches is an important aspect of every research. It helps to set the area of the research as well as identify blind spots to be covered. I do realise that historical part of my Thesis might be long, but that was my conscious choice. I strongly believe that religion cannot be studied separately (for example, from historical background, human psychology, political situation). We cannot isolate religious life of an individual from cultural and political life of the society and historical traditions. That is why I refer to the religious history of Russia as well as to the current situation in the country as the factors that influenced and formed religious views of Russian immigrants in Finland.

The empirical part of the Thesis included conducting the interviews, making observations and fieldnotes, structuring and analysing the interviews findings and outcomes. I also used the table system, filling the tables with simplified answers (tables are presented in Appendix section of my work), as well as scoring system for some evaluation analysis.

## 2. Historical Frame of the Research.

### 2.1 Historical perspectives of religious life in Russia.

Religious history of Russia includes thousands of years. Obviously, it is impossible to rewrite it in few abstracts. However, I find it necessary to cover main historical landmarks that has formed the nowadays state and its cultural life, as well as people's mentality and traditions. I will focus on Orthodoxy and Islam in Russia, as those are two denominations that most of my respondents named as their religion.

Since 988 Orthodox religion has been a core of Russian culture. Brought in the country as an alternative to paganism, it quickly became the main censor of social norms. Orthodox calendar corresponded with peasant's everyday needs and agriculture seasons<sup>3</sup>. Though the Russian Orthodox Church never officially ruled the country, for many centuries it remained a powerful organization that influenced politics, regulated social life, inspired soldiers at wars and supported oppressed peasants. In the Middle Ages after gaining the independence from Constantinople in 1589, the Moscow confessions were represented in the country: Catholicism, Judaism, Lutheranism, Old Believers, Armenian Christianity, Buddhism and Lamaism, Reformed churches, Mennonites, Baptism, Karaite Judaism, Anglicanism. Most of the confessions were recognised and tolerated by the state. The Old Believers and some small sects (like Mormons, Shtundists, Khlysts, Doukhobors) were the only ones which were called detrimental (вредный) and forbidden.

The Revolution of 1917 has changed the core idea of the state system and regulation. The new state institutions were created, the new idea of cheerful future where everyone is free, prosperous and equal, occupied people's mind. Atheism was supported by the majority of the party leaders. The Church as institution was abolished. Religious organisations no longer had juridical status. All the properties and treasures were nationalised. Mass arrests and religious persecution became a new Soviet reality<sup>4</sup>. It reached the climax in the years of the Great Terror.

During the Second World War religion inevitably became part of the state propaganda. 1941 was the first year when the Easter could be celebrated. The churches on the occupied territories were not destroyed. However already in 1948, the party recommended to prevent any religious activities in regions<sup>5</sup>. In 1958 on 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union religion was determined as relic of the past (*пережиток прошлого*). All the

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<sup>3</sup> Щапов Я.Н. Государство и Церковь в Древней Руси, X-XIII вв. М.: Наука, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> <https://kulturologia.ru/blogs/240118/37562/>

<sup>5</sup> Unusova A. Islam V Bashkortostane. Ufimskij poligraphcombinat, 1999 – P. 213.

churches, mosques and houses of worships were closed. Antireligious propaganda became a part of educational process (on all levels) and one of the aims of all Party organisations. Religion was ridiculed in art, cinema, cartoons, books and mass media. Institute of Scientific Atheism (*Институт Научного атеизма*) was established in 1964. Since 1965 all religious organisations were under control of Council for Religious Affairs (*Совет по делам религий*).

In the 80s, the years of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, Mikhail Gorbachev and his government started to make small steps towards cooperation with religious organisations. Although the atheism was still part of educational process, first positive articles about religion appeared in mass media. 1988 was the year of 1000<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Christianisation of Russia. Though originally special ceremonies were supposed to be held inside Orthodox communes, the celebration became a public event. It marked a significant twist in relations between state and religion in USSR. Most of the respondents of my research were born in this changing environment.

As I have already said in the Introduction, I do believe it is important to study religion in the bigger frames of historical and sociological disciplines. I included this subchapter in my Thesis to show that Russian society has a very long and complicated history of religion. Many centuries of building of religious traditions made it a huge part of social living and people's mentality. 70 years of Soviet propaganda just could not annihilate it. At the same time it is important to see that on all the stages of religious history of Russia it stayed one of the main strongholds of the state.

## 2.2 Revival of religious traditions in nowadays Russia.

The Soviet government did their best to drub religion out of people's minds. But obviously three generations were not long enough period to achieve total atheism in the society. I do believe that if they had at least 100 more years, the change could be more significant. However, persecution against Church had the opposite effect. Russians in general have tend to feel deep sympathy towards all who suffer or are oppressed, thus the soviet period is sometimes seen as martyrish period what created even bigger popularity of religion during last two decades.

Russian Constitution of 1993 defines the Russian Federation as a secular state. It also says that no religion may be established as a state or obligatory on and that all religious associations shall be separated from the State and shall be equal before the law<sup>6</sup>. The Constitution also

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<sup>6</sup> Konstitutsiya Rossijskoj Federatsii (prinyata na vsenarodnom golosovanii 12 dekabrya 1993// Rpssijskaya gazeta ot 25 dekabrya 1993. - Chapter 1, Article 14.

guarantees the freedom of conscience, the freedom of religion, including the right to profess individually or together with other any religion or to profess no religion at all, to freely choose, possess and disseminate religious and other views and act according to them<sup>7</sup>.

Sinelina in her article divides the process of changing the attitude towards religion in Russia in four periods: 1989-mid 1990-s (religious boom, when the number of believers grew from 20 to 60%), the mid-1990s to about 2004 (the growth in levels of religiosity was less rapid, but it did not start to fall), 2004/2005-2011 (the overall growth of religiosity stopped, but the number of churches, monasteries and religious organisations have grown) 293-294 . The last stage according to Sinelina started after 2011 and is characterised by the renewed growth in religiosity. The survey conducted by RAS indicated that the religiosity of the Russian population continued to rise (from 59% in 2004 to 65% in 2011)<sup>8</sup>.

Today Orthodoxy remains the leading confession in Russia. Though officially the Russian Federation is a secular state, the church receives a significant government support (starting with the fact that it is free from paying income taxes). The state and the Church are developing shoulder to shoulder, it is hard to imagine any important event without any popes participated. Even the Ministry of Defence special meeting is attended by the Patriarch. The number of people who consider themselves as Orthodox keeps growing. Recent data<sup>9</sup> provides the number of 55-80 %, recent polls showed it about 74%. But that's the quantity, what about the 'quality'? Only about 5 % say that they go to church regularly.

Islam is the second biggest denomination in Russia today. There are about 8 millions Muslims in the country (about 5% of population)<sup>10</sup>. The majority in these numbers are so called ethnic Muslims, who not necessarily follow all the religious practices and customs, but identify themselves as Muslims according to the family traditions and traditions of the region they live in. That is relevant in Muslim republics in European part of Russia, such as Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, while republics of the Northern Caucasus (Chechnya, Dagestan, Adygea, Ingushetia) are known for their strong Muslim norms and strictly following the traditions. The number of Muslims in other regions (where Islam has never been a leading confession), especially in the biggest cities such as Moscow, St-Petersburg, Novosibirsk and Nizhny Novgorod, is constantly growing because of the working migration from Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan).

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem - Chapter 2, Article 28.

<sup>8</sup> Sinelina Y. The dynamics of Orthodox and Muslim religiosity in Russia, 1989-2012, *Religion, State and Society*, 43:3, P. 295.

<sup>9</sup> Otnoshenie k religiyam <https://www.levada.ru/2018/01/23/otnoshenie-k-religiyam/>

<sup>10</sup> Indeks very. <https://ria.ru/20170823/1500891796.html>



I would also like to provide some of my own watching. Though I do not live in Russia now, I still follow the everyday life through the social media and during my visits. I do see churches overcrowded on Easter and Christmas, but that's probably only two biggest celebrations that are really popular. I do see that the church wedding ceremonies are becoming more common and even those couples, who got married in the USSR, now repeat the ceremony in churches. Couples of my age do usually baptize their kids and of course share the pictures of the ceremonies on Instagram. Usually they ask their close friends to become God-parents, forgetting that initially God-parents come to your life to teach you all religious traditions. It is also a usual practice when people pay for special ceremonies of 'blessing' their cars or houses. And of course, people go to church in time of some dramatic events in their lives (divorce, death of relatives or friends, diseases). There is an old Russian proverb: "Russian man would not pray till it thunders". I would say that Russians tend to turn to religion only in the time of need or lack of support, but they do not usually think of it while they are healthy and happy. I emphasize that these watching is my own general impression of the situation in Russia and is not the result of any specific research.

Sinelina points out several reasons for the revival of the interest in religion:

- The collapse of the official atheist ideology and disappointment in it
- The removal of bans and limitations on believers
- The development of the positive attitude towards religion in public opinion led by the artistic and intellectual elite and the mass media
- A gradual change in the attitude of officialdom towards the church, leading to cooperation and support
- A return to roots, to the beliefs of one's ancestors: a view of religion as a means of self-identification
- An interest to something new that had formerly been forbidden<sup>11</sup>.

From my point of view, I would add to this list the need of some people to find a replacement of the idea of bright communist future and the live regulating rules dictated by the Party. Many people had to face new reality of democratic society and were struggling in finding the basic guidelines. The church with its rituals at some point has replaced the ideology and filled the gap in people's minds and soul. Sinelina really accurately claims the third reason as "The development of the positive attitude towards religion in public opinion

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<sup>11</sup> Sinelina Y. The dynamics of Orthodox and Muslim religiosity in Russia, 1989-2012, *Religion, State and Society*, 43:3. P. 292.

led by the artistic and intellectual elite and the mass media”. I would like to step a little bit forward with this argument in the next subchapter.

### 2.3 Religion as part of propaganda in the Putin’s regime.

The huge territory of Russia, its geopolitical location (both in Europe and Asia), high number of citizens, multiculturalism, complicated history – those are the factors that created the unique reality of nowadays Russia. It has never been easy to rule it, they tried monarchy, communism and democracy now. Although any ideology is today forbidden on Constitutional level<sup>12</sup>, it is hard to imagine such a huge territory without some core ideas promoted by state.

Possessing so many land areas, natural and human resources, Russia developed by self-colonisation. Any wars the Empire started had only strategic meanings for sea trade routes and control over borders. In the past centuries the idea of the Unique Russian way was promoted by many historians and philosophers. However, this public domain, intelligentsia, was small. Most of the population did not tease themselves with any philosophical questions, because they were focused on the daily surviving. At the same time, the core idea that would unite simple people was always needed. It inspired people for the war, it helped them to resist the challenges of hard life of simple peasants or workers, in the end it helped to keep huge masses of people under control<sup>13</sup>. Still it is not enough to create some uniting concept, it needs to be promoted, promoted by propagandistic tools.

Propaganda does not have one explanation, but it is a word with associations. Britannica defines it as dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumors, half-truths, or lies—to influence public opinion. Propaganda is the systematic effort to manipulate other people’s beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, insignia, hairstyles, designs on coins and postage stamps, and so forth). Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas<sup>14</sup>.

Propaganda in nowadays Russia reminds me of Japanese three wise monkeys – we don’t talk about propaganda. Somehow it always stays in the shadow and unspoken. However, it is impossible to deny that it exists, and exists on the state level. I have written an essay about propaganda in Russian mass media for the RCD course on Mass media. This topic is personal for me, as the violation of freedom of speech and censorship were among main reasons for

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<sup>12</sup> Konstitutsiya Rossijskoj Federatsii (prinyata na vsenarodnom golosovanii 12 dekabrya 1993// Rpssijskaya gazeta ot 25 dekabrya 1993.

<sup>13</sup> Rhodes A. Propaganda: The art of persuasion: World War II. (1976) – P. 124.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/topic/propaganda>

me to make the decision to leave the country. I have conducted a small research on propagandist methods and tools Russian mass media, but here I would like to focus more on the ideas they promote.

There is no official document or book or article that could be an expression of National Idea of Russia today. But I am sure if that existed the title would include at least three or five of these adjectives – huge, strong, great, powerful, mighty, Orthodox, true, military, super. The idea of Russian uniqueness is not new. It was a powerful empire, it was a society of happy and equal, now it is a struggling against the whole world, but still military strong and mighty state. There is a phrase used in the opening titles of a popular comedy TV show that was deriding nowadays Russian reality – We are living in the best country in the world, other countries are simply jealous (*Мы живем в самой прекрасной стране в мире. Все остальные страны нам просто завидуют*). I would say that is a short version of national idea promoted by Putin's regime.

One of the most powerful ways to solidate the society is the created image of external enemy (the United States in case of Russia). The opposition of East and West has ancient historical roots in Russian history. The culmination of tensions was the Cold War. And I would say that the mood and ideas of Cold War did not go away, on the contrary they are widely used. To weapon against this 'outside enemy' is unity, consolidation, and patriotism<sup>15</sup>. In many sense Russia is seen as the opposite to the dying tortuous West. For example, although levels of church attendance and prayer are relatively low in Orthodox-majority Russia, 85% of Russians overall say homosexual behavior is morally wrong. Even among religiously unaffiliated Russians, three-quarters say homosexuality is morally wrong and 79% say society should not accept it<sup>16</sup>.

Russian language is generous in describing one's attitude to the country. It might be just a state (государство) or a country (страна). But at the same time Russia is our Motherland (Родина), Sway (Держава), Fatherland (Отечество). Those words do not have adequate translation, because they bring strong emotional aspect. And propaganda appeals to those emotions. In this created reality of imaginative war with the rest of the world a figure of strong leader is obviously needed. Vladimir Putin might be criticised for his political decisions, but no one can deny that he is charismatic man. At some point he is a successful product of the

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<sup>15</sup> Van Herpen, M. Putin's Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy. (2015)

<sup>16</sup> Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe

team he is working with, all the image makers, speech coaches, psychologists, speech writers, hair dressers and many others.

Multiculturalism and tolerance are one of the ideas of nowadays Unique Russia. At the same time, we see that the rights of sexual minorities are constantly violated, journalists are no longer allowed to write what they think, gender inequality is still on agenda, and even minority religious organisations cannot feel safe any longer.

Appealing to the glory past is an essential part of any patriotism<sup>17</sup>. Religion today became a part of promoted idea of true values, image of normal traditional family, patriarchal society, unity of Slavonic nations, revival of old true Russian traditions. And of course, Orthodoxy plays an important role behind all those ideas. Even the political idea of the past centuries that Moscow is the Third Rome had the religious justification. According to that, two previous Romes were demolished because they betrayed the Orthodoxy.

During last decades Russian Orthodox Church has become a powerful organisation which influences not only religious and cultural aspects of life. Religious leaders are now attending many political events. Putin and other political figures are attending main Orthodox holidays worships. President has many times said that Russia and Orthodoxy are inseparable, and that Orthodoxy played exclusive role in uniting the tribes and creating the state of Rus<sup>18</sup>. However, the support of Orthodoxy is much more than just pathetic words. Thousands of churches have been built and reconstructed. Orthodox lessons are back to the educational program in many schools. Church holidays are celebrated in the national scale.

The second biggest denomination Islam is not promoted on the state level. For many years Russia did not know any famous Muslims figures. However, today the situation is slightly changing. If before Islam was known only in the regions where it historically was a part of culture, now you can get some information about Muslims religious traditions and celebrations on the news or in a newspaper. People got to know some Muslim politician leaders (like Ramzan Kadyrov), actors, singers and of course sportsmen<sup>19</sup>.

I would not say that Islam is popularised in the society. For many ordinary Russians Islam is still strongly associated with separatist movements in the 1990s and nowadays world threat of terrorists. But it is obvious that for instance Muslim republics of the Northern Caucasus are

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<sup>17</sup> Jowett, G. S., O'Donnell V. (1992). Propaganda and Persuasion. London, New Delhi.

<sup>18</sup> Zhuhan V. How Russian Church serves Kremlin propaganda.

<sup>19</sup> Avedissian L. (2019). Power and Propaganda in Modern Chechnya: Ramzan Kadyrov and the New Digital Authoritarianism

allowed to live according their own rules and own traditions. And this autonomy that are guaranteed to them by Vladimir Putin also works for the positive perception of his image.

At the same time Russian Orthodox Church is living through a big trust crisis. The surveys of the previous years have shown the significant decrease in trusting the Russian Orthodox Church (from 24% in 2006 to 39% in 2011)<sup>20</sup>. That might be explained with the fact that the church started to interfere in the secular public processes and events<sup>21</sup>. But I also would like to point out the work of opposition mass media who always attract the attention to all the criminal cases, corruption accusations, and public scandals in which representatives of ROC are involved<sup>22</sup>. Having all those ideas in my head I started the first block of questions with referring to respondents' childhood and family traditions, as they were formed and developed in this comprehensive time of USSR collapse and the religious revival.

#### 2.4 Relations between Finland and Russian Federation.

Finnish-Russian relations are not in the main focus of my research. However, they cannot be ignored considering that all the newcomers can very often become hostages of the political situation. Relations between two countries might have a significant influence on the attitude towards the immigrants. In cases when county of their origin is seen as aggressor, many negative factors in immigrants' adaptation might appear.

Relations between Finland and Russia have a long and complicated history. Finland has obtained rather small territory, small amount of population, not many cities or towns, it is located 'in a corner' of Europe, and all these in combination with two powerful neighbors – Russian empire and Kingdom of Sweden. Finns who spoke suomea, included in a group of Finnish language family, did not totally belonged to historical union of Scandinavian countries. While being a part of the Russian empire Finns did never belong to the community of Russians and other Slavic nations, partly because of the differences in language, but mostly due to differences in mentality and culture. Thus, during the centuries Finland remained a country "in between".

After being conquered by the Russian Empire Finland has experienced a significant influence of the dominant state in political, economic and cultural sphere. At the same time, it received a vast autonomy, which was uncommon for other Russian regions. It and was neither 'consumed' nor assimilated. The country has preserved own language, political

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<sup>20</sup> Sinelina Y. The dynamics of Orthodox and Muslim religiosity in Russia, 1989-2012, *Religion, State and Society*, 43:3, P. 300.

<sup>21</sup> Knorre, B. From "The Church Tithe" to "The Church Economics".

<sup>22</sup> Lamoreaux J., Flake L. The Russian Orthodox Church, the Kremlin, and religious (il)liberalism in Russia.

system, religion and cultural traditions. During all these years Finland had its own legal system, banks, post service, own church, custom and financial system.

The twentieth century brought even more notable changes for Finland. At the beginning of the century it gained independence. But was it independent “enough”? For a long period, other countries dictated their decisions to this small Northern country and learning to live as an independent country required some time. On the other hand, it was obvious that unstable Russia became a huge threat, as the future policy and interest of the state were unpredictable. In these complicated circumstances Finland was in need to find some support and alliance. At first it was neighbor Sweden, but the Winter and Second World Wars changed the initial plans. It was impossible to follow the example of Sweden that stayed neutral while being attacked by Soviet troops.

After hard lessons of two wars Finland had neither the opportunity nor the wish to struggle against any of its neighbors. The policy of neutrality was chosen. During long period of recovering and rehabilitation, Finland was touched by European integration process. With economic tied to other European states and the ideas of common security becoming a member of European Union was then a logic and expected step. However, new state formed on ruins of former Soviet Union, Russian Federation, for many years remained an important trade partner for Finland.

Today after so many years of escaping any strategic unions, Finland turned to be involved in opposition of West and East once again. While Russia tends to blame the United States for escalating Cold War moods and atmosphere, and the European Union blames Russia for annexation of the Crimea and active involvement in Ukrainian civil conflict, Finland bears a large burden of economic sanctions through losing one of its most significant trading partners, which is crucial for economy of such a small country.

### 2.5 Historical experience of Russian immigration to Finland.

In general neighbour countries tend to have many people crossing the border between the two countries. Finland and Russia have even more complicated history – Finland used to be a part of its giant neighbour. The borders were reviewed and changed several times. However, it was small northern territory of Finland that was attractive for Russian immigrants for centuries. The number of Finnish immigrants in Russia has always been significantly lower than Russian immigrants in Finland. The first Russians started to settle in Finland already in 1700’s. The first 13 Russian family names are mentioned in the list of Helsinki citizens in 1724. Since then, most immigrants from Russia settled in the capital region and in Eastern parts of Finland.

After 1809, when Finland became a part of the Russian Empire, it experienced a bigger flow of immigrants. As I have already mentioned earlier Finland had broad powers of autonomy. However, one of the most important factors that attracted peasant and traders from other regions of the Russian Empire was the fact that Finland was free from paying the taxes. Most of the immigrants of the nineteenth-century were peasants that followed their owners. It was not easy to get official permission of local authorities to resettle or to buy any property. However, this was a time of prosperity of Russian internships in Finland. Many family names became well-known, for example, Sinebrychoff, Kisileff, Kavaleff, Koroleff, and Wavulin<sup>23</sup>.

After the Revolution of 1917 Finland has received thousands of political immigrants. 1922 became a climax of that wave – more than 33.000 of immigrants from Russian were officially registered. However, more than a half of those had left the country during following several years for France, USA and Canada. A very small percentage of immigrants of those waves are still identifying themselves as Russians. The Soviet Union did not give its citizens any chance to escape from the country. Thus, during almost whole twentieth-century there were no more immigrants flows from the East.

The last and the biggest wave of immigrants from Russia has started in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1990, Finland's president Mauno Koivisto announced that Soviet nationals of Finnish descent had the right to apply for Finnish repatriate status to migrate to Finland. The program of the repatriation was officially closed in 2016. During these years approximately half of the Ingrian Finnish population (some 30 000 people) moved to Finland. It has formed the core of the present Russian diaspora in the country.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://ricolor.org/europe/finlandia/fr/rusk/5/>

### **3. Theoretical Framework, Concepts and Previous Studies.**

#### 3.1 New life of immigrants: ways of adaptation and challenges.

Immigration has always been a part of manhood history. Although people have different reasons behind their decision to leave their native countries, they all might face similar challenges in the country they arrive. On the one hand immigrants are needed, especially in the welfare states. They are motivated to ‘fight’ for their lives in the new country, thus they are not afraid of any work and “fill” those spheres where local population don’t want to work. They are also motivated to get proper education for themselves and their children. They put bigger effort in the working and studying process, what can be healthy for the economy of the country that accepted them<sup>24</sup>. At the same time stress level and feeling of vulnerability, communication failure, and experience of hostility might reason in depression, isolation and even aggression. Then neglected immigrants can become tension and even a threat for the local society.

The process of adaptation can develop in different ways. I have explored many theories and approaches and did not found one unified concept. Researchers tend to use equal terms with slightly different meaning. However, I would like to try to define some possible scenarios of immigrants living in new conditions.

John W. Berry, a Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the Queen's University, uses the term acculturation to define the adaptation process<sup>25</sup>. He points out four stages of acculturation: Assimilation (an individual gives importance to the host culture by ignoring his native culture and accepts a new Identity in the host cultural environment), Separation (an individual is willing to maintain his own native culture and totally avoids the culture of the host community and also shows no interest in learning the host culture), Integration (an Individual wants to maintain his original culture and on the other hand shows an interest in learning the host culture) and Marginalization (When an Individual is neither interested in maintaining his native culture nor in learning something from the new culture in the host community).

Professor Berry focused his researches on the US case study and created a matrix that shows possible ways of adaptation of immigrants, where the defining factors are their wish

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<sup>24</sup> Anthias F., Pajnik M. *Contesting integration, engendering migration: theory and practice*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014 – P. 36.

<sup>25</sup> Berry, J. W. (2001) *Immigration, acculturation and adaptation*// *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46 – P. 7.



and ability to adjust to the new culture and their loyalty to the native cultural traditions and desire to preserve them.

<b>Acculturation Model</b>		
	Identification with Heritage culture: <b>HIGH</b>	Identification with Heritage culture: <b>LOW</b>
Identification with US culture: <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Integration (Bicultural)</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>
Identification with US culture: <b>LOW</b>	<b>Separation</b>	<b>Marginalization</b>

Each of these ways or stages of adaptation can also be divided in even smaller steps. For example, American sociologist Milton Myron Gordon<sup>26</sup>. He stands out seven stages of assimilation:

- Acculturation: newcomers adopt language, dress, and daily customs of the host society (including values and norms).
- Structural assimilation: large-scale entrance of minorities into cliques, clubs and institutions in the host society.
- Marital assimilation: widespread intermarriage.
- Identification assimilation: the minority feels bonded to the dominant culture.
- Attitude reception assimilation refers to the absence of prejudice.
- Behaviour reception assimilation refers to the absence of discrimination.
- Civic assimilation occurs when there is an absence of values and power struggles.

No matter how small these steps accepting the new culture can be defined, the question of self-identification becomes crucial on each of these stages. Identity is thus an important issue in any study on immigration<sup>27</sup>. Identity is regarded as emerging from our transactions within our socio-cultural and historical context. But we should never forget, that identities are dynamic, multiple and changing in relation to social settings, interaction and speech contexts.

<sup>26</sup> Gordon M. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*. Oxford University Press, 1964 – P. 46.

<sup>27</sup> Meijis-Sarvi I. *Молодые эмигранты из России в поиске собственной идентичности* – P. 91.

A person has a sense of belonging to his or her own group = ‘us’, which is separated from ‘them’. A person’s social identity and his or her individual identity are not, however, exclusive but they interact with and complement each other. “Them” are also significant in formation of a person’s identity, because one’s idea about oneself and “us” is formed in relation with outsiders while reacting with them<sup>28</sup>.

According to social theory of identity of Henri Tajfel<sup>29</sup>, social identity of an individual is part of his self-representation, that has its roots in his/her knowledge of being part of a social group, that relates to emotionality and value of being a member of this group<sup>30</sup>. In many cases diaspora becomes the group that gives immigrants the feeling of belonging.

Being put in new cultural environment individuals tend to start a search for self-identification with recognizing of differences between cultures. On this way immigrants can face lots of challenges. The first obstacle that newcomers often experience is the language issue. Finnish language is difficult to learn as it differs from Russian in so many ways. But that is just a starting point. There is much otherness in every single aspect of everyday life, of social norms, cultural traditions, food habits, national mentality. Two neighbour countries with one of them having been a part of another for more than a century, and still two unique cultures. Furthermore, immigrants often have to face the fact that not every local citizen would welcome them. Nationalism, bullying and aggression can also be a challenge of migration.

Refugee crisis in Europe, national tensions in Asia, controversial situation on the border between the United States and Mexico have drawn attention to problems of immigration, adaptation of immigrants, religiosity of immigrants. Many researchers and academics work on these problems were made not only at universities, but also in Centres of Immigration Studies and different associations. Most of migration process studies are focused on immigrants flows into the United States. However, during the last decades this topic became crucial for Europe as well. The largest European network of scholars in the area of migration and integration is IMISCOE (*International migration, integration and social cohesion*)<sup>31</sup>. Institute of Migration of Turku is one of the members of IMISCOE.

Migration process have been studied as an important historical process. While before the twentieth-century those studies were more focused on geographical resettlement, today it is seen as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Researchers pay more attention to the questions of

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<sup>28</sup> Sanna Iskanius. Russian-Speaking Immigrant Students in Finland: Negotiating Language Identity/ - P. 163.

<sup>29</sup> Tajfel H. Social Identity and Intergroup Relations. 1981 – P. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Miettinen H. Диаспора и этническая идентичность ингерманландских финнов.– P. 114.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.imiscoe.org/about-imiscoe>

interactions between local population and new comers, stages and challenges of adaptation and integration. At the same time, they try to find possible ways to decrease possible stress and tensions.

There are several periodical journals that present collections of new research and articles several times per year. *The Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*<sup>32</sup> covers both migration and refugee studies. It does not have any specific focus and covers various countries and topics, such as migration governance, migrant/refugee integration, and related policies and practices. *The International Journal of Migration and Border Studies*<sup>33</sup> also presents conceptual, theoretical, empirical and methodological dimensions of studies on migration and borders. The latest articles cover issues about refugees settling in the UK, Canada, and Australia. *Comparative Migration Studies*<sup>34</sup> is another journal in the field of migration, integration and ethnic studies. CMS aims to develop a wider disciplinary angle than most existing journals: besides sociology, political science and anthropology, the journal also aims at economics and law.

Most of the biggest universities today also present their own studies on migration and integration. Project *MigrationOxford*<sup>35</sup> introduces the large wide-ranging portfolio of migration research at the University of Oxford, as well as teaching programmes, people, events and publications related to migration studies. *Cambridge Asylum and Migration Studies*<sup>36</sup> publishes individual or collective works that may be legal, political, or cross-disciplinary in nature, which cover all aspects of the transitional movement of people. *Centre for Migration and Development* of the Princeton University<sup>37</sup> covers a wide array of research, travel and conference programs aimed at linking scholars with interests in migration and development. *Scientific Research Laboratory of the Faculty of Economics*<sup>38</sup> of the Moscow State University focuses on problems of population and demography, migration and resettlement. University of Helsinki has own *Migration and Diaspora Studies Research Group*<sup>39</sup>. The project studies transnational ties and practices of immigrant and diaspora communities. The recent publications of MIDI include such topics as politization of refugee

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wimm20/current>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.inderscience.com>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.imiscoe.org/publications/library/6-journal-cms/23-comparative-migration-studies-vol-2-no-1>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.migration.ox.ac.uk/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/series/cambridge-asylum-and-migration-studies>

<sup>37</sup> <https://cmd.princeton.edu/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.econ.msu.ru/departments/cps/migration/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/researchgroups/migration-and-diaspora>

crisis in public debate, governance of the asylum reception system in Finland, challenges of families with immigrant background.

There are thousands of articles, books, reports and monographies written on migration. I would like to mention those authors that formed my own vision of the problem. Professor John W. Berry (Queen's University) studies immigration from the perspective of psychology. He specifies stages of the adaptation process of immigrants that he distinguishes as acculturation<sup>40</sup>. American sociologist Milton Gordon makes the next step and delineates six stages of assimilation. He pays special attention to the social connections that immigrants build in the new society<sup>41</sup>. Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist from Poland, worked on questions of prejudice and social identity theory, according to which self-identity is always connected with being a part of a bigger social group<sup>42</sup>. Relations between immigration and religion were studied by many scholars, among them were Dr Ingrid Storm, professor Charles Hirschman, professor James A. Beckford, Doctor Martha Frederiks and many others.

American sociologists Wendy Cadge and Elaine Howard Ecklund presented their review of researches on immigration and religion in 2007. They explored the academic interests in sphere of religious life of immigrants in the United States, focusing not only on the practices of religious organisations, but also the importance of the religion in social institutions (such as civic organisations, families, schools, health-care organisations), and different ways the religion influences the immigrants' adaptation, their ethnic and gender-based identities .

Russian researchers examine problems of migration by mostly focusing on internal migration on the Post-Soviet area. However, the European refugee crisis and globalisation also spark their interest. Some authors see immigration as inevitable part of globalisation (V.Inozemtsev, E. Narochnitskaya, L. Grinin). Others try to differ types of migration (T.Lopukhina, I. Molodikova). Questions of adaptation and interaction with local population are also on agenda (S. Zakharov, A. Ponomareva, N. Lebedeva).

### 3.2 Immigration and religion.

The importance of religious aspect in the process of integration has been widely discussed. For example, Dr Ingrid Storm (The University of Manchester) examined religiosity and attitudes to immigration in Europe. During her research she has made several important conclusions<sup>43</sup>:

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<sup>40</sup> Berry, J.W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5-34.

<sup>41</sup> Gordon M. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*. 1964.

<sup>42</sup>Tajfel H. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. 1981.

<sup>43</sup> <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/posts/2017/11/does-religion-matter-for-attitudes-towards-immigration/>

- Religion does neither predict, nor define immigration attitudes uniformly across countries
- Those who belong to majority denominations are more likely to be concerned about immigration (as they represent the local majority)
- religion can become an expression of national belonging, conformity to social norm or conservative values.

Religious differences between immigrants and natives can be also a matter of practice as well as preference. Those immigrants who are relatively secularized may be quite close to one another in terms of values, beliefs, and behaviours. In contrast, those who are devout believers and faithful practitioners of religious rituals may be quite distant from one another, as well as from natives, in terms of values and traditions. And what is also important is the devotional behaviour already established by immigrants in their countries of origin<sup>44</sup>.

Charles Hirschman, professor of the University of Washington, defined three main R that religion can provide for the immigrants: refuge, respectability и resources<sup>45</sup>. While being away from native country and family, immigrants may find a refuge in religious community, feeling of belonging to the community, basically it means a psychological support which put the stress level down. Religious groups can also offer an alternative way of getting respectability in the new society. That is especially important for those who had to lower their professional or social status. Finally, Hirschman emphasize the role of resources that immigrants can get from their religious community (language courses, consultations, financial support, living accommodations, etc).

Today religion is more often considered as an independent aspect that can influence such factors as immigrant economic mobility, civic and political participation, integration and social assimilation. Some researchers (for example Herberg) also point out that immigrants might abandon their native language and ethnic traditions already in the second generation, while religion stays an important factor of self-identification for a longer period<sup>46</sup>.

At the same time some scholars tend to see religion as a problematic factor in the integration process of immigrants. Doctor Zygmunt Bauman sees religion more often as an obstacle than as a solution. For example, in one of his recent books *Strangers at our door*<sup>47</sup>, Bauman claims that the influx of refugees in Europe in 2015 has triggered a migration panic,

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3629734/>

<sup>45</sup> Hirschman Ch. The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States. - International Migration Review, 2004, vol. 38, issue 3, pp. 1206-1233.

<sup>46</sup> Cadge W., Ecklund E.H. Immigration and Religion.

<sup>47</sup> Bauman Z. (2016). Strangers at Our Door. Polity

which led to many mechanisms of marginalization to be activated (fear, stereotypes, othering, scapegoating, moral numbness).

Religion is a significant part of any culture. Even if an individual consider him/herself as atheist, he/she still experience influence of religion on daily basics. Year calendar in many countries has connection to religious holidays, it affects eating habits, some customs. Religion can create a safe space, when individual will be surrounded with others who share same values and beliefs. At the same time religious differences can reason in misunderstanding, arguing, prejudices and conflicts. Fr some isolated or marginalised immigrants' religion can become the only strength what might end up with radicalisation and slow down the adaptation process.

### 3.3 Russian diaspora in Finland today.

All recent statistics on immigration can be found on official website of Finnish Immigration Service (Maahanmuuttovirasto)<sup>48</sup>. According to the data collected in 2017 Russian community forms the second biggest language minority (after Swedish) in Finland. (Table 1). More than 77,000 of people consider Russian as their native language. However, that does not mean that all those people are originally from Russia. Another graphic (Table 2) shows that less than 30,000 of immigrants have Russian citizenship. Even though Ingrian migration program has been closed, Russians are still leading in the number of applications for Finnish citizenship (Table 3). More than 11,000 of applications were received, about 10,000s were approved.

However, Russians in Finland are a heterogeneous group, which includes the succession of resettled, as well as newcomers<sup>49</sup>. There are number of reasons behind the wish to immigrate from nowadays Russia. In the 1990's the possibility to move to Finland, offered for Ingrians by the Finnish authorities, provided a solution to the difficult political, economic and criminal situation in Russian and other former Soviet states. Today these reasons are still on agenda. Instability and inability to predict any future, intolerance to sexual and religious minorities, violation of human rights, censorship and lack of freedom of speech might be also named as reasons to leave Russia that appeared in the recent decade.

Russian diaspora or even New Russian diaspora is the issue of interest for the Professor of University of Oslo Pål Kolstø. I would like to refer to some of his ideas, though he has never studied Russian diaspora particularly in Finland. However, his studies may help to understand life and mechanisms of Russian diasporas in general.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://migri.fi/en/statistics>

<sup>49</sup> Laihila-Kamkainen S. Русскоязычное население в восприятии финнов. – P. 72.

Pål Kolstø has started studying Russian diaspora already in the 1980. He uses the term New Russian Diaspora to signify Russians who live inside the former Soviet Union but outside Russia. In 1991 the multinational Soviet state was replaced by 15 nationally-defined states, where the Russian language and Russian culture was relegated to a minority status, tolerated at best, but often not even that<sup>50</sup>.

Kolstø claims that the identity choices of the diaspora of Russians is be strongly influenced by several circumstances. Some of them affect the entire group within a given area, while some vary from individual to individual within the community. One of the key aspects then is the geographic distance to Russia. If the external homeland is just across the border (which is the case of Finland), the identity links between it and the diaspora are less likely to be severed. People just don't need this Russian community safe space that much, first because they are able to travel a lot.

As I have already said before Russian diaspora in Finland is not a homogenous group. All of them had number of different basis for obtaining the official residence permit (and citizenship in perspective). For example, Ingrian Fins received valuable government support (including KELA benefits, living accommodations and language courses). At the same time support and recognition was more than just any material values. The minority was recognized on many other levels – it has own national day, flag, symbols, etc. However, integration was not an easy process for them. Many Ingrian Finns, including mixed families, who moved to Finland did not speak any language other than Russian and in many cases still are recognized as Russians. And here the problem of recognition appears. Ingrian Finns want the Finnish society to recognize them as equal, as they share common historical roots. For the society this group of people still is seen as Russians, as Finns usually tend to mark all the Russian speaking community as just Russians. And this all creates some tension inside the Russian diaspora.

### 3.4 Previous studies on Russian immigrants.

The last years of Putin's regime were marked with a new wave of emigration. This phenomenon is widely discussed on the Internet. Some authors try find the reasons for this process. A group of journalists have created a controversial project *Underground Russia*<sup>51</sup>. It presents a brave personal stories, interviews and reports from the opposition point of view. One of the recent big publication is a big sharp investigation on emigration tendency. Information on mass emigration can be found only on web resources that consider themselves

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<sup>50</sup> Kolsto Pål. The New Russian Diaspora and Russian Identity in Finland . – P. 257.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.proekt.media/research/statistika-emigration/>

as opposition to Putin's regime (Ura, Znak, Lentach, Meduza, Gazeta). On the contrary, loyal to Putin mass media blame Western powers for exaggerating the problem of negative migration in Russia<sup>52</sup>.

As I have already told before the lives of Russian immigrants abroad have been studied from different perspectives. The Russian diaspora has been the issue of interest for the Professor of University of Oslo Pål Kolstø since 1980. He uses the term the New Russian Diaspora to signify Russians who live inside the former Soviet Union but outside Russia<sup>53</sup>. Professor Kolstø does not have specific focus on one country of their immigration. At the same time, he studies political and social processes in contemporary Russia. The Russian diaspora as a phenomenon is also studied by Sergei Ryazantsev, Artem Lukyanets, Roman Manshin and others.

While the authors named above study Russian emigration with no ties to definite state or region, others focus their attention on life of Russian immigrants more specifically. Thus, the recent book *The New Jewish Diaspora: Russian-Speaking Immigrants in the United States, Israel, and German*, edited by Zvi Gitelman, examines questions of transnationalism, political and economic changes of immigrants' lives, transformation of self-identity and religious changes. Israel has experienced a big flow of immigrants from Post-Soviet space. L. Remennick<sup>54</sup> explores social insertion in the context of repatriate migration and intercultural relations (for example, through the study of marriages between Russian immigrants and native Israelis). Multiple approach to new Russian emigrations is also used by K. Semenova<sup>55</sup> and Timothy Heleniak<sup>56</sup>. Semenova operates not only official statistics data, but also refers to mass media discussion, while Heleniak studies the impact of collapse of the USSR on the changing self-identification of recent Russian immigrants.

M. Skarovsky tells about Russian Orthodox Church traditions in Yugoslavia in the twentieth-century<sup>57</sup>, emphasizing consolidation that immigrants experienced facing challenges of adaptation. Some information about history of establishment and growth of

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<sup>52</sup> <https://ria.ru/20181226/1548703868.html>

<sup>53</sup> Kolsto Pål. (2006) 'The New Russian Diaspora and Russian Identity in Finland', *Studia Slavica Finlandesica*. Tomus XXXIII. Issues of Identity in the Russian-Speaking Diaspora. – P. 262.

<sup>54</sup> Remennick L. Exploring Intercultural Relations

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235898540\\_Exploring\\_Intercultural\\_Relationships\\_A\\_Study\\_of\\_Russian\\_Immigrants\\_Married\\_to\\_Native\\_Israelis](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235898540_Exploring_Intercultural_Relationships_A_Study_of_Russian_Immigrants_Married_to_Native_Israelis)

<sup>55</sup> <https://imrussia.org/en/nation/2224-a-new-emigration-the-best-are-leaving-part-1>

<sup>56</sup> Timothy Heleniak. *Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 57, No. 2, Land: Borders, Identity, Rights (Spring 2004), pp. 99-117

<sup>57</sup> <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/vozniknovenie-russkoy-pravoslavnoy-tserkvi-zagranitsey-i-religioznaya-zhizn-rossiyskih-emigrantov-v-yugoslavii>



Orthodox and Jewish Russian communities can be found on official Church websites in different countries (on the United States<sup>58</sup>, Israel<sup>59</sup>, Germany<sup>60</sup>, even in Australia<sup>61</sup>).

The Russian speaking community is the second largest minority in Finland. This group was explored by students, scholars, researchers and journalists from different perspectives. The refugee crisis in Europe has drawn more attention to intercultural tension between Muslims and local population, to radicalisation and nationalism. At some point, the Russian diaspora faded into insignificance and there has been no big research on it conducted during last years. Still I would like to cover those publications that inspired me for my research and helped to form and conduct the interviews.

Zhanna Zayonchkovskaya in her research *Post-Soviet Emigration from Russia to Western Countries*<sup>62</sup> refers to statistic data of the last decades. She points out that Russian immigration to Finland was quite stable during all past years (exception was only 1999-2000 due to the financial crises) and smooth (the border to the native country is close and both countries have historical and cultural connections).

Aksel Kirch explores Russian minority in Estonia<sup>63</sup>. Although he does not cover case of Finland, he talks a lot about linguistic reality and changing identity. Another research made in Estonia was conducted by Raigo Liman<sup>64</sup>. He focused on religiosity of population of current Estonia, separating Estonian Russians in a specific group. The group appeared to be more religious. Liman made a conclusion that for Russians living in Estonia religion became one of the significant aspects of common ethnicity.

Irina Meyzhis-Sarvi was working with young students for four years in Lahti, helping them with cultural and physiological adaptation. In the article *Young Immigrants from Russia in search of self-identity*<sup>65</sup> she is speaking about her experience. The author talks a lot about significance of family ties in the stressful environment of new society. She also claims that difference in educational system sometimes become an obstacle in the adaptation process for

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<sup>58</sup> <https://pravoslavie.ru/1164921>, <http://www.unification.com.au/articles/3748>

<sup>59</sup> <https://pora-valit.livejournal.com/3747596.html>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.dw.com/ru>

<sup>61</sup> <https://pravoslavie.ru/103514.html>

<sup>62</sup> Zayonchkovskaya, Z. Migration Patterns in the Former Soviet Union – P.23.

<sup>63</sup> Kirch, A. (2004). The Identity Dynamics of the Estonians and the Russians Living in Estonia Before and After the EU Referendum – P. 37.

<sup>64</sup> Leman R. Religioznost naseleniya v sovremennoj Estonii – P. 200.

<sup>65</sup> Meijis-Sarvi I. (2006). Молодые эмигранты из России в поиске собственной идентичности (=Young immigrants in search of own identity). – P. 105.

the youthhood. Meyzhis-Sarvi believes that young immigrants (15-18) face a specific crisis of self-identification, that is influenced by both age and ethnicity.

There have been several studies made on the problems of Finns' attitude towards Russians in general and Russian immigrants in particular. Elvis Ngwayuh and Stephen Croucher has presented their research in the article *Threats and attitudes toward Russian-speaking immigrants: a comparative study between younger and older Finns*<sup>66</sup>. Authors compared the perceptions and attitudes of younger (16-20) and older (over 65) individuals (totally 242). Results showed that both groups tend to have prejudices against Russian speakers. However, representatives of older generation tend to express more feelings of threat, than the younger generation.

More research in the same field was made by Asteria Brylka, Tuuli Anna Mähönen and Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti. Their article *National identification and attitudes towards Russian immigrants in Finland: Investigating the role of perceived threats and gains* was published in *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*<sup>67</sup>. 335 samples were collected all over Finland. Individuals with stronger national identity felt more threatened and had negative attitudes towards immigrants.

One of the most recent research was made by Evelliina Heino and Minna Veistilä in 2015<sup>68</sup>. 25 family interviews were held in Eastern Finland. All respondents immigrated to Finland from Russia or other countries of Post-Soviet space. As a result, the authors pointed out three discourses: the integration, the recognition, and the security. The analysis revealed situations with lack of social support and showed complexity and tensions of informal and formal social relations.

An interesting research on Russian speakers in Finland as media users was recently conducted by Olga Davydova-Minguet, University of Eastern Finland<sup>69</sup>. It was first general study in the sphere of relations between Russian speakers in Finland and mass media. The author explored how and which mass media the target group followed. One of the outcomes of the research was author's conclusion that Russian-language content in Finland could be

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<sup>66</sup> Ngwayuh, E. N., & Croucher, S. (2014). Threats and attitudes toward Russian speaking immigrants: a comparative study between younger and older Finns. *Russian Journal of Communication*, 6 (3), 308-317

<sup>67</sup> Brylka A., Mähönen T.A., Jasinskaja-Lahti I. (2014) National identification and attitudes towards Russian immigrants in Finland: Investigating the role of perceived threats and gains// *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*. Volume56, Issue 6 – pp. 670-677.

<sup>68</sup> [https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/202486/njmr\\_2015\\_0013.pdf?sequence=1](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/202486/njmr_2015_0013.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>69</sup> [https://tietokayttoon.fi/artikkeli/-/asset\\_publisher/10616/suomen-venajankieliset-mediankayttajina-media-matkustaa-maahanmuuttajan-mukana](https://tietokayttoon.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/10616/suomen-venajankieliset-mediankayttajina-media-matkustaa-maahanmuuttajan-mukana)

increased and focused more on the lives, problems and achievements of Russian speaking community.

Employment of Russian immigrants in Finland attracted interest of several researchers. Mikko Kangaspunta, University of Tampere, conducted a research<sup>70</sup> on integration of Russian immigrants into Finnish labour market and society. The author found out that the discrimination existed more strongly in the labour market than in society and that application process when seeking employment is one of the challenges that immigrants face.

Another thesis in the same sphere was written by Dmitry Sinkevitch. In his research he tried to map the problems that Russian immigrants face when searching for employment<sup>71</sup>. People who were interviewed admitted that they believed that preconceptions against Russian immigrants did not let them to find a job easily. At the same time unemployment became of the biggest challenges of being an immigrant in Finland, as it influenced both physiological condition and financial situation.

The book *Venäjänkieliset Suomessa. Huomisen suomalaiset*, edited by Arno Tanner and Ismo Söderling, focuses on the demographic characteristics of the Russian-speaking population, the historical origins of moving from Russia to Finland, and the successes and challenges of integration. The book also looks at how Russian citizens abroad are targeted by Russian foreign policy. There are about 20,000 Russian dual citizens in Finland.

A valid contribution to the studies of contemporary Russia and Russians in Finland has been made by Aleksanteri Institute, which is coordinating and organising Finnish research and teaching in Russian and Eastern European Studies. For example, Kaarina Aitamurto has studied internal politics of Russia, Islam sects and attitude to Islam in Russia, internal migration in Russia<sup>72</sup>, etc. Visiting Professor from the European University (St. Petersburg) Oleg Kharkhordin is working on the text of a book on theories of the classical republicanism and their relevance for the contemporary Russian politics and society. Jussi Lassila is also focusing on internal policy in contemporary Russia, including such topics as elections, new wave of nationalism, propaganda and contemporary Russian youth.

Religiosity of contemporary Russia has been studied by different scholars. A big research was conducted by Maija Penttilä (Turunen) and presented in her book *Faith in the heart of*

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<sup>70</sup> Kangaspunta M. Integration of Russian immigrants into Finnish labour market & Society: Are we still afraid of Russians? LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2012 – 68 p.

<sup>71</sup> Sinkevitch, D. Employment of Russian Immigrants in Finland. <https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/37267>

<sup>72</sup> <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/kaarina-aitamurto/publications/>

*Russia: the religiosity of post-Soviet university students*<sup>73</sup>. The author points out seven types of socio-religious identification: congregational, experiential, national, humanist, mental growth, intellectual, and non-religious. Penttilä also claims that the proportions of the survey respondents claiming to have both conventional and non-conventional beliefs were high even by the international comparisons. Although the participation in religious activity was at low level.

Religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland has been studied in the article *New Orthodox Immigration in Finland* written by Tuomas Martikainen<sup>74</sup>. The author analyses immigrants' activities in two Orthodox parishes in the cities of Helsinki and Turku, which can be seen as places for immigrants' integration into Finnish society. The major argument proposed by the article is that language as a specific factor should be taken into consideration, while role of ethnicity should not be overestimated.

I would also like to mention some researches based on interviews, that helped me to form my own questionnaire and build the interviewing process. Aino Saarinen, Jana Sverdljuk, Kerstin Hägg interviewed Russian women in frames of 'Norden' project<sup>75</sup>, funded in 2004 by NOS-S, the Joint Committee for Nordic Research Councils for the Humanities and the Social Sciences. The number of the interviews was 65 (in Finland, Norway and Sweden). And the main topics of the discussions were: issue of citizenship, social justice and cultural recognition, everyday life.

Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti has conducted a research on discrimination among Russian- and Estonian-speaking immigrants in Finland<sup>76</sup>. There were more than 3800 randomly selected households who received the questions by post, about 63 per cent did send them back. I was really fascinated how the researcher presented the outcomes by dressing them up with formulas and graphics.

In 2002 Sanna Iskanius studied multiculturalism through the prism of multilingualism<sup>77</sup>. 256 Russian-speaking immigrant students from thirteen cities of Finland completed the

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<sup>73</sup> Turunen M. (2007). Orthodox monarchism in Russia: is religion important in the present-day construction of national identity? // *Religion, State and Society*, 35:4, 319-334.

<sup>74</sup> Martikainen, T. (2005). *New Orthodox Immigration in Finland* // *Finnish Yearbook of Population Research*, 41 – pp. 117-138.

<sup>75</sup> Saarinen A. *Reflections on Interviewing Russian Women Immigrants: Challenges in the Nordic Countries*// *Studia Slavica Finlandensia*. Tomus XXXIII. *Issues of Identity in the Russian-Speaking Diaspora* – pp. 275-308.

<sup>76</sup> Iskanius S. (2004) *Russian-Speaking Immigrant Students in Finland: Negotiating Language Identity* // *Studia Slavica Finlandensia*. Tomus XXI. *Russian-Speaking Immigrant Population in Finland* – pp. 161-185.

<sup>77</sup> Iskanius S. (2004) *Russian-Speaking Immigrant Students in Finland: Negotiating Language Identity* // *Studia Slavica Finlandensia*. Tomus XXI. *Russian-Speaking Immigrant Population in Finland* – pp. 161-185.

survey. Twenty of them were later interviewed. The findings of the survey indicated that the language identity of the students who participated in the research was mainly Russian and that they had a strong connection to their mother tongue. The time of the residence did not influence this identity: it appeared to remain strong, no matter how long one had lived in Finland.

### 3.5 Defining the terms.

The term *religious* is presented in the title of my Thesis work. In general, it means something or someone relating to or believing in a religion. This term has lots of synonyms that add slightly different meaning to it: *devout* (having or showing deep religious feeling or commitment), *pious* (devoutly religious), *reverent* (feeling or showing deep and solemn respect), *practising*, *faithful* (relating to faith or religion or religious belief), *devoted*, *non-secular*, etc. In my work I used the term religious in a broad meaning. Thus, religious life in the title of my work include any religious traditions and practices of an individual, any of his/her beliefs or religious ideas, and any spiritual connections or intentions.

The Russian analogue of this term would be word *религиозный* (*religious*). In the second part of the questionnaire I use word *религиозный* same as *верующий*, which literally means 'believing'. As well as in English language word *религиозный* is usually used in a broader meaning and also has many synonyms (набожный, благочестивый, добродетельный, праведный, воцерковленный, духовный, церковный, несветский).

The special attention should be paid to the word *воцерковленность*. It is nowadays often used in everyday life, though the concept of 'voctserkovlennost' (enchurchedness) was developed by sociologist Valentina Chesnokova only in the 2000-s. The conception described the state of an individual who has been brought to live within the life of the church, who is aware of its regulations, rituals, traditions and customs for daily living and feels comfortable in this atmosphere<sup>78</sup>.

The last section of my questionnaire included the question if my respondent consider him/herself as a religious person. If the answer was positive I asked the responded to explain what meaning he/she put in this word to avoid any speculations or misunderstanding. Running ahead I mention that most of the respondents used the phrase 'I am religious, but not enchurched', emphasizing their bigger concern about the core idea of faith rather than rituals and church attendance.

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<sup>78</sup> Chesnokova V. (2005). *Tesnym pytyom: process voctserkovleniya nasekeniya Rossii v kontse XX veka*

## 4. Aims and Methods.

### 4.1. Aim of the study and the research questions.

Every year about three thousand people move from Russia to Finland<sup>79</sup>. And although those people most likely look as typical Europeans, they might speak Finnish or at least good English, they might have been to Finland many times before as tourists, they did not run from war and it is highly unlikely that the life threat was the reason to leave Russia, still those people go through all dramatic and stressful challenges of becoming a ‘lamer’ in Finnish society.

I was among those three thousand shown by the statistics, when I moved to Finland in 2015. In general, I am an optimistic person with good social skills. It did not take long when I met dozens of new friends and started to receive informative and physiological support of caring people. But I clearly remember those first months of feeling lost and lonely. Due to the family traditions I was not baptized (neither my parents were). I do not have strong religious identity (though grandfather of my mother was an Orthodox priest, and grand-grand-father of my father was imam). I never tried to find any motivation in faith.

However, one spontaneous meet has brought me to the Viikki Church. It was the first place in Helsinki when I felt truly welcomed, though by that time I had been living in Helsinki for few weeks already. Back then I started to ask myself the questions that led me to writing this Thesis: What is the role of religion in integration of immigrants? Does religion matter? Is it an obstacle that creates prejudices and fears? Do people become more or less religious being put in new cultural environment?

Before I started to work on my thesis, I tried to formulate the hypothesis of my research. Basing on the previous research and my own experience and watching, I expected to know that in general religion did not play a significant role in life of Russian immigrants in Finland. At the same time, I expected that for some respondents’ church and religious organisations could be helpful in their integration process.

The aim of my thesis work was to find out what is the religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland. The main research questions thus became – how active religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland is; if there is a connection between family traditions, own religiosity and socialisation; are the new comers from Russia integrated into society; if a church/ mosque/

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<sup>79</sup>[https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/novosti/tempy\\_rosta\\_russkogovoryashchego\\_naseleniya\\_finlyandii\\_ne\\_snizhayut\\_sya/9973687](https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/novosti/tempy_rosta_russkogovoryashchego_naseleniya_finlyandii_ne_snizhayut_sya/9973687)

other religious organisation can provide support for immigrants and create a safe space for new comers.

The target group of my research were Russian immigrants (20-30), who moved to Finland during last three-five years. I have decided to conduct a research among younger generation, because they were born in the last years of or already after the USSR regime. It means Soviet anti-religious propaganda as well as atheistic education did not affect directly their religious views genesis. The second factor (life experience in Finland of three-five years) was engaged because this is the time limit, when an individual is no longer a new comer and already learned a lot about new society, at the same time he/she might not be fully integrated and still experience difficulties in communication.

#### 4.2. Interview as a research method.

Already before formulating topic of my research I knew that I would use interview as a method. My Bachelor Thesis (Faculty of History, Petrozavodsk State University) was dedicated to Rabindranath Tagore and his contribution to cultural life of Bengal. At that time, it was mostly text analysis and translations. After graduation I was working in the biggest news agency of Russia *RIA Novosti*, where interviews were a significant part of our working process. I also focused on interviews while doing my internship for the RCD program. My experience as well as knowledges received in RCD inspired me and helped me to organise and manage my research.

There is no lack of studies in the field of religion and immigration. However, most scholars concentrate on studying the work of religious organisations, and the questions of how immigrants who are not actively involved in activities of religious organisations experience religion. When one studies not an organised or unified group of people, but ‘collection’ of individuals, it is always better to use interviews as a research tool, because it allows to create an individual approach<sup>80</sup>.

American sociologists Cadge and Ecklund point out so called ‘lived religion’ approach, that focuses on immigrant’s real stories and their own experiences in a range of social spheres. They also emphasize that the previous researches in the United States focused mostly on the operating of religious centres and communities. Thus, the individual approach is innovative<sup>81</sup>.

Interviews as method can be defined as a qualitative research technique which involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore

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<sup>80</sup> Cadge W., Ecklund E.H. Immigration and Religion.

<sup>81</sup> Ibidem.

their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation<sup>82</sup>. Grant McCracken in his book *The Long Interview*<sup>83</sup> says that interview can take the researchers into the mental world of individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. According to Z. Dörnyei, a good qualitative interview should always flow naturally and be rich in details<sup>84</sup>.

Interview always means referring to the ‘first source’, when you get the information in his/her own words. I have I conducted twenty-eight interviews all together. Three of them cannot be included in the research and can be seen as bonus materials for the discussion and conclusion. Twenty-five interviews formed my target group. For number of different reasons five people who participated in the research could not meet me in person and answered the questions in written form. With other twenty people we met in person and had all interviews recorded.

Searching for the respondents was not an easy task. There was no official institution, company or organisation that I could use for lobbying my interests. I did not want to ask any religious organisation (who might be interested in knowing the research outcomes) for help, because it could influence the randomness of the respondents’ selection. Thus, my main strategy of finding representatives for my target group was asking for the help from my friends, using social media and public events.

I also faced on more challenge I would like to highlight. In different periods of Russian history role of religion in life of Russian society was different. Many decades of atheism promoted by the Communist party had obviously made a huge impact on people’s mind. Although nowadays Russia is living through a notable revival of the religious aspect, still faith and believing is not widely discussed. Russians usually do not touch those topics during discussions with friends or introducing them to new people. It stays as a private family issue. That is why I was positively surprised when all my interviewers talked openly about such personal topic. It was important that the interviews were held in Russian language, because it let the respondents to feel more comfortable and express their ideas and emotions freely.

I did not interview any of my close friends, as I knew it could create uncomfortable atmosphere and not be objective. However, some of my friend recommended several possible participants of the research. In social media I asked for help in social networks, such as the

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<sup>82</sup> Boyce, C. & Neale, P. (2006) “Conducting in-depth Interviews: A Guide for Designing and Conducting In-Depth Interviews”

<sup>83</sup> McCracken G. *The long interview// Qualitative Research Methods, Volume 3.* 1988 – P.15.

<sup>84</sup> Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.



group of my HOAS community (where I knew lots of Russians students were living) and active Russian speaking groups on Facebook and Vkontakte. I also talked to some people while visiting Mozgoboinya quiz games<sup>85</sup>, which collect about 500 Russians speakers in one place every two weeks. In the end, I got more replies than I expected, that is why the number of interviews was increased.

I used structured interviews, they all were based on the questionnaire. There were about 40 questions divided in four parts. In the first part of the interview people were asked to introduce them shortly. The second part referred to respondent's childhood and religious traditions of his/her family. The third part focused on respondent's life experience in Finland. In the last part I asked them to tell about their own religious views, attitude to religious practices and traditions.

Formulating proper and relevant questions is half of success of a good research. I started this process during our RCD group Thesis sessions, and I must thank my supervisor and groupmates for useful and fresh ideas. All together we created the scheme or skeleton of my questionnaire that I could complete with more detailed questions later. Although I had clear vision of the questions to be discussed, meeting people in real life brought some changes. Some questions were added after few first interviews, some were transferred from one section to another.

Furthermore, I had to change drafting of few questions. Most of my respondents were Orthodox, and initially I was not prepared to meet any Russian Muslims, as I have not met them before in ordinary life in Helsinki. It led me to have an awkward moment when I was sitting in front of a Muslim girl from Tatarstan, reading one of the questions about visiting a church in her childhood. At that point I realised that all my questions were presupposed to be answered by Christians. It was a live interview which gave a chance to change the draft already in the discussion. After that interview all mentions of church were completed with words 'mosque or any other religious organisation'.

Following the ethical norms is a significant part of a successful interview<sup>86</sup>. First of all, I tried to create a comfortable atmosphere for my respondents. Some preferred to meet at home where are no other people listening to us. For others it was better to meet on a neutral territory (café, university halls, library). After introducing myself and presenting my research I asked the permission to tape the interview. All my respondents knew that participating in the

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<sup>85</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/mozgohelsinki/>

<sup>86</sup> McCracker G. The long interview// *Qualitative Research Methods*, Volume 3. 1988 – P.22.

research was volunteering, they all allowed me to publish their names. However, we agreed that I will not include the first section of the interview in the tables with simplified replies that I use in Appendix section in purpose to keep the replies as confidential as possible.

I must say that all the interviews went smoothly. The duration of the discussions varied from 15 to 80 minutes. Some respondents were not interested in religion in general and gave short precise replies. Others were ready to tell much more than just answering the questions and interviews transformed to the live discussion. But all the conversations had positive atmosphere and no unpleasant moments appeared. At the same time as the childhood memories were involved, we experienced few true emotional situations.

Although I was recording all the interviews, I also did the field notes. Making notes keep your mind focused on the conversation<sup>87</sup>. You can always write down some questions you want to discuss with the responded or ask to provide more details. In my notebook I fixed the place where the interview was held. It helped a lot later, when I was analysing the outcomes, because it brought me back to the atmosphere and gave a clear understanding of emotions that respondent put in his/her words.

As I have already told, five people could answer the research questions only in the written form. It did not give the chance to ask some more specific questions or itemize something. At the same time, the respondents had more time to formulate their replies and even ask their relatives to remind some details from their childhood. I analysed all the interviews together, not separating them in two groups.

#### 4.3 Data analysis.

After all the interviews were conducted, I transcribed them. The next step was to create the thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail<sup>88</sup>. First, I carefully read again through all the interviews, marking some answers that I could use as direct quotations. Then I tried to point out some tendencies in the replies. I had about 130 pages of answers, so I decided to use the statistic table system<sup>89</sup>.

I had filled the tables with simplified replies (some answers were simple *yes/no*, others could be summarised by adverbs *often/rarely/usually*, some had just names of items or holidays). When I had all the tables filled, it became much easier to describe and analyse the

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<sup>87</sup> Wolfinger N. (2002) On Writing fieldnotes: Collection strategies and background expectancies// *Qualitative Research*, 2(1) – P. 86.

<sup>88</sup> Braun V., Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology // *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006, 3, p. 77-101.

<sup>89</sup> Ermolaev O. *Matematicheskaya statistika dlya psihologov*. Izdatelstvo Flinta, 2003 – P. 37.

outcomes. Electronic version of the tables is attached in the Appendix section, though originally, I was working with their paper versions and filled them by hand.

While analysing the outcomes of the research I used counting the results and dividing them into groups. At some questions it was enough to operate majority/minority terms, others demanded percentages. I also added some tables to make the results more visible. Mostly I was comparing the results focusing on definite question. However, cross analyse was also applied.

I have also referred to mathematical scoring method of evaluation of interviews results<sup>90</sup>. This method is widely used in business, marketing and physiological researches<sup>91</sup>. However, I decided to try to apply it to ‘measure’ my interviewees religiosity and to find any relations or ties between their religiosity and their own satisfaction and emotional comfort of life in Finland. I took all the questions with simple answers (mostly yes/no, and some adverbs variations) and divided them in two groups Family background and own religiosity and Life in Finland. Then I applied coding method, when experimentally collected data are transformed into a number code<sup>92</sup>.

That allowed me to ‘estimate’ the religiosity of individual and their satisfaction of their socialisation in Finland. I realise that this is quite an experiment, but I strongly believe that theology can be studied in various ways. In the end, I created a simple points system with two axes, trying to find any influences between religiosity and integration of Russian immigrants.

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<sup>90</sup> Melnikova O., Khoroshilov D. (2010) Sravnitelnyi analiz rezultatov kachestvennogo issledovaniya (na materiale intervju)// Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta, Seria 14, Psihologia – P. 22.

<sup>91</sup> Leonova E. Empericheskie metodi psihologicheskogo issledovaniya. Uright, 2019 – P. 24.

<sup>92</sup> Ermolaev O. Matematicheskaya statistika dlya psihologov. Izdatelstvo Flinta, 2003 – P. 12.

## 5. Results and Outcomes: Interviewees' Family Traditions and Religious Background.

### 5.1 Personal background of the interviewees.

There were twenty-five people participated in the research. I have seen at least one time in my life ten on them, and I had not met other fifteen. All the respondents have moved to Finland from Russia. Most of them were born and lived in Petrozavodsk, Republic of Karelia (population - 267 thousand). Few of them immigrated from Murmansk (304 thousand), Moscow (12 mln) and St-Petersburg (5 mln). And there were single representatives from Tashkent (2,4 mln), Yekaterinburg (1,4 mln), Obninsk (106 thousand), Kostomuksha (28 thousand) and small village Kilemar, Mari El Republic (4 thousand). While analysing the size of the cities the respondents were living before the movement I made a conclusion that only for three of them moving to Helsinki could be an additional stress, because the city is significantly bigger than their native cities.

City of origin	
Petrozavodsk	13
Murmansk	3
Moscow	2
St-Petersburg	2
Tashkent	1
Yekaterinburg	1
Obninsk	1
Kostomuksha	1
Kostomuksha	1

There were more young women participated in the research (eighteen female and seven male). The age group was from 20 to 30. The average age was 26, 72 (six people were under 25, while nineteen were over 25). According to the age all the respondents can be also divided in two big groups: born in USSR – thirteen and born in the Russian Federation – twelve. However, this division does not make a huge difference, as even though some participants were born in USSR, they were still too young to experience any big influence of the party ideology.

More than half of the respondents (fourteen) were single at the time of conducting the interview. Others (eleven) were officially married or had a civil partner. Seventeen respondents did not have kids, eight were parents. Five of the parents had one kid, and three

had two kids. It was important to know the personal life circumstances, because interviewees referred to family as a significant part of feeling of socialisation in Finland.

I asked my respondents about the education level they got either in Russia or in Finland. Another question concerned the profession they gained and the nowadays occupation. These questions were included in the research to get more detailed picture of the personalities of my respondents, as well as to complete the picture of their lives changes they experienced after the movement.

Twenty of my respondents (80%) had higher education: the majority had the Bachelor degree (fourteen), then Master degree (four) and PhD (two). Three people had only school of college education and two were still students.

Level of education	
Students	2
School or professional education	3
Bachelor	14
Master	4
PhD	2

Four of my respondents were young when they moved to Finland and got only school education in Russia. Six of the respondents did not get any education in Finland. That means that nineteen (76%) did study in Finland after they moved. More than half of them (twelve people) continued the education in the same sphere, while seven people changed the field. Most people with higher education (fifteen out of twenty) graduated in the Human sciences field (history, law, linguistics, cinema and arts, education, political studies), others got the degree in Medicine, Business and Economics. Thus, education became one of the most significant way of integration for young Russian immigrants.

As I have told earlier two of the respondents were still students and did not work. Four of the respondents (all female) did not work because they took care of children at home. Other nineteen people were occupied on the moment of the interviews. Eleven of those worked in the sphere relevant to their education. Eight people decided or had to change their profession. Three of them experienced the decrease of professional status (they worked as waitresses in Finland, while used to have better paid and 'respectable' professions in Russia). But for other five the decision to change the profession was deliberate. Thus, I can make a conclusion that none of my interviewees have experienced long-time unemployment and work is also a significant part of integration process.

My research had a specific target group limited by age and the time of living in Finland. Thus, I will not claim that my respondents are typical representatives of big Russian diaspora in Finland. According to Kolstø, the larger the Russian community is within a given area, the greater is the chance that it will hang on to a distinct identity. Conversely, if a diaspora group is scattered over vast areas and lives intermingled with other ethnic groups it will more easily adopt its basic characteristics, including language and religious views. This is the situation presented in Finland. The respondents did not lose the language skills and still had a close connection to their motherland, at the same time they all have found their place in the new society.

### 5.2 Family religious traditions.

Family traditions are the essential part of religious life of any individual. The ideas and customs that we absorb being kids often form and impact our lives as adults. I have focused the second part of the questionnaire on respondents' childhood and religious practices of their families. I asked them about their parents and grandparents' religious life to understand in what circumstances and views they were raised and if they inherited any religious traditions from the older generation. There were also few questions about their spouses and kids and any of religious education respondents received.

The first question was really straight - *Do you think that your family can be considered as religious?* I was expecting respondents to ask me to give more precise meaning of the term religious, but most of them provided the simple yes/no answers. We got back to the meaning of the term later, in the last part of the research. The majority (15 out of 25) gave negative reply. One of them also noticed that though his family cannot be considered as truly religious they still were extremely superstitious.

Two people gave a neutral reply 'не особо', which can be literally translated as 'not really'. One gave the reply 'частично' (partly), emphasizing that her family is really big, and relatives have different religious views. Seven people (28%) said that their families were religious. Two of them expressed some doubts by replying with 'ну да' (well, yes) and 'скорее да' (rather yes). One person clarified that her family was religious, but not 'воцерковлённый' (in good standing). One person emphasized that her family were strong believers and faithful Muslims.

Many decades of atheistic policy of communist party would probably make us believe that people born in the last years of USSR and right after its collapse were not baptised as many Orthodox traditions would be lost. The next group of questions concerned baptising service and godparents My research shows different results. Twenty-two of my respondents have

gone through the Orthodox baptising ceremony. One respondent was raised in strong Muslim traditions. And only two people were unbaptised.

Baptised as Orthodox	22			
		Initiated by parents or other relatives	Under 1 years old	6
			From 1 to 7	7
			From 7 to 12	5
		Own decision	From 12 to 15	3
		Under the pressure	At the age of 18	1
Raised as a Muslim	1			
Never been baptised	2			

All respondents can be divided in several groups according to the age when they were baptised. Six out of twenty-two were baptised before they turn one year, seven – in the preschool age (from 1 to 7), and five respondents at the age from 7 to 12. In all these cases (78% of baptised respondents) the decision was initiated by parents of grandparents. Three people said that they were baptised in the teenage (from 12 to 15) and that it was their own choice. Only one respondent went through the procedure of baptising at the age of 18 under the pressure of future husband who wanted to go through the ceremony of marriage in the church. Some respondents described their experience, which showed quite various pictures.

It was a spontaneous decision. My mom has decided that on that moment we need to be baptised. I think she also went through the ceremony on the same day. But it was just an influence of the moment – Interview 2.

It was never a tradition in our family. At that moment it was something really new – Interview 6.

My grandparents took me to the church when I was visiting them on holidays. It was all done in secret; my parents did not know anything. – Interview 19.

Everything was done according to old Karelian tradition. I was only few months old and they threw me in a small forest lake – Interview 3.

It was my decision, at that moment I believed it was a thoughtful decision. I met the priest several times before the ceremony. I took everything seriously – Interview 1.

The godparents of my respondents were chosen by their parents and grandparents. For most of them (68%) they were friends of the family (ten people) and relatives (seven people). Four people were adult enough to go through the ceremony without godparents. According to the Orthodox traditions, godparents should teach their godchildren all the church traditions and customs, become their spiritual guides and advisors. Also, it is widely believed that if something bad happens to biological parents, godparents need to protect and take care of their godchildren.

However, only two respondents said that their godparents talked with them about religion and went with them to the church. Eight people said that they still are in touch with their godparents, but they do not talk about religion, just share their news and congratulate each other on holidays. Eight respondents have lost any connection with their godparents, mostly because their parents were no longer friends with them. These numbers show that the figures of godparents play nominal role, usually chosen only according to personal preferences without any spiritual efforts demanded.

I asked my respondents if their parents and grandparents were baptised and if yes, when it happened. It was interesting to see that some of the respondents had to call their parents to find that out. It means that religious views were not discussed inside the family and were private matter. Eighteen respondents (72%) told that at least one of the parents was baptised, three of them went through the ceremony together. Three respondents said that their parents were atheists and one did not have a reply. As I have mentioned before, the family of one respondent were faithful Muslims and had strong religious traditions in the family. Twenty respondents said that at least one of the grandparents was baptised (most of the respondents mentioned grandmothers), two gave negative answer and one could not reply. Few of the respondents knew under what circumstances that happened, but most of them said it happened in the time of the USSR.

My grandparents lived in the countryside, the party was not so strict there. There were more baptised people in the villages – Interview 19.

We never talked about that, but I saw my grandmother praying. Somehow she did not shared that with us and did not manage to give that spiritual traditions to us – Interview 23.

As I have told before in my work, some changes in the attitude to religion in Russia can be seen nowadays. It was important to know if my respondents see those changes in their families. When being asked if their relatives attend a church or a mosque only three people said they did that regularly. Eighteen people (78%) gave such replies as ‘иногда’ (sometimes), ‘нечасто’ (not often), ‘редко’ (rarely), ‘очень редко’ (exceedingly rarely), ‘по праздникам’ (only on holidays). Four respondents said that their relatives do not ever go to churches or visit them only as beautiful buildings while travelling. When being kids five of my respondents were not brought to a church by their relatives. Fourteen said that they used to visit a church with relatives, but not often or rarely. And only six respondents were visiting church or mosque regularly when they were kids. These number prove that as far as Russia kids are usually baptised in young age and do not go through the Confirmation, being baptised does not automatically means that you are a strong believer.



It now came to my mind that my mom was always quite an atheist. But last years they with my dad visit church. It was not visible when I was a kid, but now there is a change – Interview 5.

Religious traditions respondents families follow, religious items they obtain, and the holidays they celebrate can be seen as important ‘marks’ of religiosity in the family. Most of the respondents (sixteen) said that their parents and grandparents have icons at home, one family even had so called Red Corner, which usually includes icons, hanging vigil light and holy water. One respondent said that her father had Quran and salat carpet. Eight respondents said their families did not obtain any religious items.

Ten out of twenty-five respondents answered that their families do not follow any religious traditions or customs. Others remembered about some traditions. The most popular sacrament was Office for the Dead (fourteen people mentioned it as compulsory). Five people said that baptising the kids is usual among their relatives. I was surprised that there was only one person who said that fastening was the important thing in the family, and that was the faithful Muslim family. None of the Orthodox respondents mentioned that. Three knew that their relatives prayed in churches and lighted the candles. One talked about her experience of visiting church wedding ceremony.

I believe that church wedding ceremony is a very important step. I don’t know many people who went through that. I know some couples wanted to wait few years after the wedding. And then I don’t know, maybe there were lazy to do that. But requiem is something natural. I haven’t heard that anyone did not want the funeral service for their died relatives – Interview 5.

Religious holidays are a big part of religious traditions in general. It was important to see what holidays my respondents celebrate and if they start to celebrate some new holidays, which can be seen as part of assimilation process. Only one person out of twenty-five said that her family did not celebrate any religious holidays. Other twenty-four could name at least one holiday that was popular in their families. The most mentioned holiday was Easter, twenty-four respondents named that holiday. Christmas was alluded by fourteen people. Among other celebrations were named Trinity Sunday, Savior of the Apple Feast Day, Shrove Sunday, all main Muslim holidays, Hindu holidays, Helatorstai, Juhannus. However, more than a half of the respondents emphasized that those celebrations even though they gather the whole family together, do not have much of religious meaning. People know the history of the holidays, they might even visit the church on those days, but they see them more as cultural tradition, than as religious event.

We celebrate Easter. But it is just a tradition, not a religious act, it is more like entertainment – when you colour the eggs – Interview 9.

My father loves the Easter cake. But he likes it just as a dish, because he loves everything sweet. And my mom used to colour the eggs with onion skins – Interview 2.

I always associated Easter more with eggs and cake, than with something religious – Interview 13.

I don't think we consider them as religious events. Easter is just an entertaining – to colour the eggs. During the Christmas period – all the fortune-telling. It always was so much fun. But those are just traditions, they are far from religion – Interview 23.

Religious traditions coming from the families can be spread to the new generations. Few questions of my interview touched not only the extended families but partners, boyfriends/girlfriends, wives/ husbands, spouses, and kids. Those people who did not have any were asked to think about the possible reply in theory. It was important to see how my respondents transferred their family religious traditions (if they ever existed) to their new families or relations.

Seventeen respondents said they were officially married or were in relations. Twelve of their life partners were baptised or considered themselves as religious persons. Eight of them were Orthodox (Russians), one Lutheran (Russian), one Protestant (Australian), one Hindu (Indian) and one Buddhist (Nepalese). However, only two persons emphasised that it was important to them that their life partners had the same faith. Five people marked that it was important for them that their partners were not any sort of religious zealot.

Other eighteen admitted that religious views of their partners do not play any significant role in their relations. At the same time three female respondents admitted they would never create a family with a Muslim guy, because of the cultural differences. These replies show that religiosity is seen mostly as a part of cultural traditions. The interviewees expressed tolerance towards most of denominations. However, Islam was the only religion that 'scared' some of the respondents.

For me it is not significant if my husband was baptised or not, but I pay attention to his attitude towards church and religion – Interview 11.

I believe I will choose a person of the same religion and cultural background. I had a negative experience of dating a guy from one Asian country. It ended up with police and court – Interview 10.

In general, I would prefer a husband with secular views. Thus, I do not even think about a Muslim in that sense. All other options are acceptable – Interview 19.

It was important that my future wife was atheist. I am scared of strong believers – Interview 2.

As I have said above eight of my respondents have kids. Four of them decided to baptise their children in young age. They have chosen the godparents among the circle of their friends. Some of them admitted that they experienced some pressure from their own parents and other relatives. Four people decided to let their children make own religious choices in the future. Three of those respondents who did not have kids yet said that they had strong intention to baptise their future babies, nine respondents did not plan to do that, other five said they did not know.

Sofia is baptised, yes. She was seven months old and we did that in Russia. But it was more like we had to do that. All the relatives kept telling – you need to do that. It was not conscious decision. Now we are thinking if we should baptise Alisa or not. Most likely we will let make this decision herself – Interview 9.

We are planning to baptise Leo when he is about one year old. I believe we will chose him godparents among our close friends, whom we can trust and can count on their help if that is needed – Interview 18.

It was a big family gathering when we baptised my daughter. My parents did not participate, as they were not interested. But from my husband side there were many relatives. She was almost a new-born. It was a real celebration, real festivity. It was a big day for the whole family. Everyone was touched and cried – Interview 23.

I decided to do that because I want my child to have some spiritual protection, to be under the God – Interview 13.

To get even more precise picture of all the possible influence my respondents could get while forming their own religious views, I also asked them about any religious education they received and religious views of their close friends. Eleven respondents told that they did not have any religious people in the circle of their close friends. More than a half, fourteen people, said that they had at least few friends who could be seen as faithful or believing. Vast majority (twelve) claimed that this fact did not make any influence on their friendship, because they simply did not talk about religion. One respondent said that they sometimes could have some discussions and even arguing, but that they still stayed close friends. And only one respondent admitted that she experienced some negative judging of her lifestyle from her more religious friends.

In general, it does not play a big role in our relations. I guess that is the reason why we can be friends, because they keep their religious views to themselves – Interview 2.

We do not have any significant disagreement. Sometimes there come up some topics that we can discuss, deliberate and even argue about. But it does not impact our communication – Interview 3.

Of course, there are some friends that are religious. But we are all tolerant enough not to express any judgment of discomfort about someone else private choses – Interview 17.

There are some faithful friends and even strong believers. I even know few pastors. But our own beliefs never prevented us from being friends. No one tried neither persuade nor convert each other – Interview 24.

As lessons on religion are not compulsory in Russia, all of my respondents received different knowledges of it. Only two respondents said they did not have any school lessons focused on religious issues. Twenty-three told that they read and discussed about religion as part of school lessons on History, World Culture, and Ethics. Eight of them later attended courses on Religious World History and Religious Studies at university. Nine respondents told that they were curious about different faiths and beliefs and searched for some more information themselves (in books and on Internet). Two of the respondents participated in international religious summer camps and one went to Sabbath school.

I was in that summer camp. There was no pressure, but we talked about the Bible and even made some performances on stage – Interview 4.

I read a lot of books about Buddhism, because I wanted to understand my boyfriend better. Before I used to date a Muslim guy. Then I read a lot about Islam trying to understand why he behaved like that – Interview 7.

I was always curious, and I read much more that just school tasks demanded. I even made my own research and made report on a conference – Interview 17.

It was not easy for me to point out any tendencies in my respondents replies. Some answers were contradictory and incomplete. I was surprised to find out that the clear majority of Russians of my age group were baptised in childhood. Even more surprising was the fact that many of their parents and even grandparents went through the ceremony at times when communist party dogmas were dominant in the society. More than a half of the respondents had godparents, who at the same time did not share or teach any religious practices with them.

For most of my respondents religious views did not play any role in their choice of a life partner or close friends. Less than a half of them showed some intention to pass any religious traditions down to the next generation and were ready to give their kids a chance to make own religious choices. The clear majority received at least school lessons level of religious studies and had own views on different denominations.

Most of my respondents' families did obtain some religious items, celebrated religious holidays, and followed religious customs. On the other hand, almost all my them admitted that this was more like a tribute to Russian cultural traditions than own spiritual needs. Most of the families did not attend church regularly and refer to God mostly at times of life crises or relatives' deaths.

## **6. Results and Outcomes: Life of Russian Immigrants in Finland and Individual Religiosity.**

### 6.1 Support of immigrants in Finland.

Facing adaptation challenges is inevitable part of integration process. However, there are lots of ways to help immigrants to adopt and I believe Finnish government is managing efficiently with this task. First important step is to provide as much information for new comers as possible. Official websites of Finnish Immigration Service, KELA, City of Helsinki, EnterFinland and many others have all necessary information to start your adaptation process. All customer services in all state institutions, banks, hospitals are available in at least three languages. Whenever you go you can ask to provide an interpreter. I do not know if that works well for all exotic languages, but at least for Russian immigrants finding a Russian interpreter is never an issue. Furthermore, there are lots of useful websites in Russian language (such as Russian.fi, doska.fi, intofinland.ru) and of course social networks groups.

Apart from information support immigrants in Finland can get help from different charity organisations<sup>93</sup>. Non-governmental organisations can also provide legal aid and advice<sup>94</sup>. The TE Office can help newcomers with finding a job. Early phase integration services by TE Toimisto specifically intended for immigrants include: guidance and advice for immigrants, an initial assessment, an integration plan, and integration training<sup>95</sup>. Integration support is also provided by Immigration Assistance Service Finland, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, University of Helsinki and many others. The Finnish Association for Mental Health provides crisis assistance and support in order to prevent mental health problems and suicides<sup>96</sup>.

Religious organisations in Finland are actively involved in the everyday life of Finnish society. Refugee crisis of recent years and immigrants' integration in general are on agenda for most of them. Thus, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church let immigrants join its ranks. Already in 2011 Episcopal meeting of bishops gave support to a change in the law to allow immigrants to join even if they do not have a registered home municipality<sup>97</sup>. Finnish Orthodox Church is helping newcomers to feel human and spiritual support and let them feel

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<sup>93</sup> <https://helprefugees.org>

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.pakolaisneuvonta.fi>

<sup>95</sup> [https://www.te-palvelut.fi/te/en/jobseekers/support\\_finding\\_job/integration\\_services\\_for\\_immigrants/index.html](https://www.te-palvelut.fi/te/en/jobseekers/support_finding_job/integration_services_for_immigrants/index.html)

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.mielenterveysseura.fi/en/support-and-help/support-and-help-foreigners>

<sup>97</sup> [https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/evangelical\\_lutheran\\_church\\_extends\\_hand\\_to\\_immigrants/5423428](https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/evangelical_lutheran_church_extends_hand_to_immigrants/5423428)

like home (kotouttaminen)<sup>98</sup>. Another important part of support of immigrants is the right of their kids to study own religion at school.

Russian immigrants in Finland have the same rights for information and other types of support as all other immigrants. Any newcomer can find language courses or get professional education. Those who entered the country on bases on Inkeri roots had the chance to visit integration and language courses before moving as a part of repatriation program. I did not find any information about any specific integration groups for Russian immigrants. Basically, it seems that this is mostly responsibility of individuals to fit in the society. At the same time there are many groups, clubs, organisations and meeting for those who don't want to lose their Russian self-identity. Dance and art groups, handcraft and geographical communities, young moms' gatherings, teenagers' clubs, intellectual games (such as Mozgoboinya, that became a huge phenomenon in Helsinki) – there are many opportunities for Russians to speak own language and find new friends.

#### 6.2 Life in Finland: Interviewees' experience.

As I have mentioned in the description of my research, I decided to narrow down my target group partly by the period they lived in Finland. I believed that three-five years was optimal chose due to number of reasons. First of all, these people cannot be seen as fresh new comers, who feel lost and just start to explore how Finnish society lives. My respondents had enough time to get some experience and form own vision of immigrant life in the society. At the same time this period was not too long to make those people assimilate and lose strong connection to Russian culture and religious traditions as its part. I asked my respondents about their experience of moving to another country, their own impressions of religious life in Finland in general, and their own emotions and feelings they were ready to share.

Most of my respondents (ten out of twenty-five) have been living in Finland for five years at the moment of our interview. Seven people – for four years, and eight people – for three. We talked with them about the reasons why they had decided to move. I got so many different replies and life stories. Most of the respondents told that they wanted to have better future for themselves and their children which included safety, stability, better salaries and pensions, better social care, better attitude to nature and clean environment. Some people talked about political reasons to immigrate, such as disagreement with state policy, corruption in Russian, fear of prosecution, violation of human rights.

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<sup>98</sup> <http://fontankafi.ru/articles/26509/>

I had to reformulate the question to get more structured replies. I have taken the criteria of the base or justification of entering the country. It literally meant on what type of residence permit they applied when they entered Finland. All respondents have visited Finland many times as tourists before they decided to move here constantly. Most of my respondents (sixteen out of twenty-five) entered Finland as students. More than a half of them decided to get a higher degree, while others were ready to start high education again. Four people got their working permit and started to work immediately, two of them later decided to study more. Three female respondents told that they applied based on family ties, following their husbands. And two respondents moved to Finland at the age under 18 with their parents.

Basis of moving to Finland	
Studies	16
Family ties	5
Work	4

I then asked my respondents if they knew anything about religious life in Finland and if that factor was important to them when they made the decision to move. All of the respondents admitted that they knew at least something about faith and religion in Finland, because they were travelling in the country and had friends who lived here. At the same time only five out of twenty said that they were reading some specific information (articles in the Internet) about churches in Finland, religious traditions, and social norms. However, twenty-three out of twenty-five claimed that this information was not important to them when they made their decision to move to Finland. Two people said that it was important to them that the state is secular, and society expressed tolerance towards religious pluralism. It was also notable that none of them mentioned anything about importance of Orthodox communes or services available.

I knew that the faith is a little bit different, but I knew that people also go to church. I knew that most of the marriages are conducted in churches. I knew that the cross differed from the Orthodox one, and that churches had simple interiors. I have never been to Finnish church before I moved here. I thought that in general Finns were more religious and they respected their traditions. And that they study religion in school and kindergartens – Interview 23.

I did not look for any information on Orthodoxy, though I am Orthodox. I knew that there were some churches. But I was curious about religion as part of the cultural life. I was exploring some statistics on religious groups in Finland – Interview 1.

Learning something new about religious life and traditions in Finland has become an inevitable part of integration and assimilation of Russian immigrants in Finland. Five interviewees said they were not interested in this part of social life and then did not get any new information about it. But the majority of respondents (twenty out of twenty-five) said

they learned a bit (fifteen) or a lot (five). It was interesting to hear what exactly those knowledges were about. The most popular answer was holidays, traditions and new calendar (twelve people). Five people told they knew more about the Finnish Lutheran church and its structure and taxes. One person told about his walks on Lutheran cemeteries and how they differed from the Orthodox ones. Three were shocked by the number of different sects operating in Finland and admitted they did not see anything like that in Russia (which did not come as a surprise due to official interdiction of their work approved on a state level).

I was surprised how open-minded Finnish church is, how it is involved in social life. Even at the university they participate in so many events, even casual. And I was shocked when I was invited to the Beer and Bible day – Interview 4.

I started to see religious holidays in a different way. I was surprised how many people attend church during baptising, wedding, on Christmas services. I saw crowds walking to the local church. But at the same time, I had mixed emotions, as I saw that such a religious tradition of Christmas celebration today became so commercial and marketing – Interview 1.

They (cultists) can be seen on every corner. They come to your house and working place. I am not used to that – Interview 14.

I learned a lot about some small religious groups, such as neo-pagans, like karhun kansa who believe in bears – Interview 2.

The next group of questions focused on emotional conditions of my respondents, what feelings did they went through while being put in stress of life of an immigrant. The first question was straight – *How do you feel yourself when living in Finland?* It was interesting to hear only few words my respondents chose for the answer. The most popular reply (eleven out of twenty-five) was ‘комфортно’ (comfortably). Seven people gave quite neutral reply ‘хорошо’ (well) or ‘нормально’ (normally). Two people described their feelings as ‘отлично’ (perfectly). Some people used also such adverbs as ‘безопасно’ (safely), ‘спокойно’ (peacefully), ‘приятно’ (pleasantly). Two people said that they felt in Finland ‘лучше, чем в России’ (better than in Russia). It is remarkable that all the words had a positive shadow.

Moving to another country is never easy. I asked my respondents if they ever feel lonely in Finland. Thirteen out of twenty-five gave negative answer, though two of them admitted later that they experienced that feeling right after they moved to Finland. All of them then also added that they rarely feel lonely now, because they have their families (life partner/ kids/ parents) nearby or they have enough new friends. Twelve people said that they still occasionally feel lonely, even if in general they don’t feel unhappy.

It was really hard in the beginning. I was really young when I moved. It was difficult. Parents were in Russia, I got no support. I did not have any friends. My Finnish language was really bad to be honest. But step by step you start to adopt. And church helped me a lot. There I met my friends and my future husband – Interview 3.

It depends on periods. My mood changed like sinusoid. In the beginning it was shock and fear. But then you adopt, achieve small goals. Then again, some disappointment when you realise that everything is so complicated and there is still so much more to do – Interview 5.



One more question in this ‘emotional’ group was *Do you miss Russia?* It might sound weird when being translated into English language, but in Russian it is usual topic for the discussion in immigrants’ circles. Nine respondents gave negative replies, two of them emphasised that they had opportunity to travel to Russia quite often. Sixteen people admitted that sometimes they feel that way. But all of them clarified that by that they did not mean Russia as the state. They missed mostly their families (all sixteen respondents), friends (ten), native cities (three), food (one), medicine (one).

You don’t miss the country. It is people, your relatives, your friends who you miss. So yes, sometimes it rolls over you – Interview 13.

I miss the closeness of my family. My mom is visiting me every few months, but for example my parents are too old to travel that far – Interview 24.

I also asked my respondents to tell more about their social life, if they were satisfied with it or if they wanted it to be more active. Seventeen out of twenty-five respondents (68%) called themselves socialised persons and were in general satisfied with the activity of their social life. They named number of groups/ clubs/ communities that helped them to keep it active, such as sport clubs, student communities, language clubs, tenants committees, parents’ meetings, craft groups, theatre group.

Twelve out of twenty-five told they regularly participate in a quiz game *Mozgoboinya*, which is truly a big cultural event for the Russian diaspora in Finland. Only three respondents named visiting church and being involved in religious activities as part of their social life. At the same time all respondents emphasised that their social activities are usually done in Russian language within Russian community. Twenty-one out of twenty-five also admitted that they would like to have more cultural events, to be more involved in life of Finnish society and to find more Finnish friends.

I always liked singing. But when I moved here I did not have any money for private lessons. I went to the church and joined the choir. Soon I started to participate in all youth events organised in the parish. Then I became a member of the Finnish Lutheran Church. I have found a place for myself – Interview 3.

*Mozgo* is so much more than just a game. Can you imagine over five hundred Russians gathering in one place. You meet your friends, you meet new people. Every time after the game I feel like I have just been to St-Petersburg – Interview 24.

I have enough of Russian speaking friends. But I would like to have more Finnish cultural events. I hope I will get that when I get back to work – Interview 10.

I know that you will never become local, equal to Finns. For example, I will never understand all the jokes, or I did not see all those old movies. Maybe only our children will be more integrated. But it does not mean you do not need to assimilate – Interview 5.

Russian immigrants in Finland face the same challenges of stress, feeling lost and lonely, as many other immigrants all over the world. They try to make their life better and get involved in the social life of Finland. However, many of my respondents admitted that most of their friends are Russians and they feel lack of communication with local population.

Apart from their families, work and education they socialise through number of other groups and communities, for example, sport clubs and hobby activities. Very few people named church commune as a place of their interests. At the same time, even those who said they were satisfied with their social life tempo, emphasised that they would like to participate in bigger number of cultural events.

### 6.3 Possibilities for religious activities available for Russian immigrants in Finland.

According to the recent researches, most Russian speakers in Finland has no religious affiliation. 77,5 percent of them are not members of any religious organisations in Finland. About 13 percent belong to Orthodox Church and less than 10 to the Lutheran Church. The Finnish Lutheran Church has one Russian language Church in Itakeskus<sup>99</sup>. Traditionally the church has Sunday services, confirmation camps, prayer groups, and home groups. All traditional sacraments are available in Russian language. The Church has own website in Russian language.

The Finnish Orthodox church has been officially under the rule of Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople since 1924. Today the Church includes three eparchies and 24 parishes. The main languages of public worships are Finnish, Russian and the Church Slavonic language. All the information about church events, news and history can be found on the official website<sup>100</sup>.

The Russian Orthodox Church in Finland has officially started its independent work in Finland in 1999. Today it has five parishes in the country, three of them are located in Helsinki. The main aims proclaimed for the Church activities in Finland are holding the contacts with Finnish Orthodox Church, Finnish Lutheran Church, wit state, religious, and public organisations, as well as with mass media of Finland; working with Russian residents of Finland<sup>101</sup>. In the frames of my research I had interviewed archpriest Viktor Lioutik, I will cover the outcomes of that interview in the Conclusion.

Since 2015 Muslims is the second biggest religious group in Finland<sup>102</sup>. The numbers are growing every year due to migration flows from African and Arabic countries. However, first Muslims in Finland appeared already in in the last decades of the XIX centuries where first Tatars moved into the country. Today Russian Tatars in Finland includes about 1000 of descendants and newcomers. They call their commune a 'big small family'<sup>103</sup>. Though Tatars

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<sup>99</sup> [https://luterane.fi/index.php?page=about\\_us](https://luterane.fi/index.php?page=about_us)

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.ort.fi/ru/>

<sup>101</sup> <http://finland.orthodoxy.ru/rus/predstvo.php>

<sup>102</sup> <https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/novosti/8448982>

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.muslim.ru/articles/272/7479/>

is not the only Muslim nation of Russia, this is the only Muslim group in Finland that offers help and conduct events in Russian languages (as well as in Tatar and Finnish languages).

Among other religious organisations that offers information and help in Russian language are – Pentecostalism (Община пятидесятников<sup>104</sup>), Mormons (Церковь Иисуса Христа Святых последних дней<sup>105</sup>), Jehova's Witnesses (Свидетели Иеговы<sup>106</sup>), Seventh-Day Adventists (Адвентисты Седьмого Дня<sup>107</sup>), Baptist Evangelical Church (Евангельская церковь<sup>108</sup>), Suomen Vaarakirkko (Церковь Ковчег Спасения<sup>109</sup>), Krishnaist (Дом для преданных<sup>110</sup>). Some of the experience of my respondents in communicating with these religious organisations will be covered in the next chapter.

#### 6.4. Own religiosity of the interviewees.

After talking about childhood, families, friends and their life in Finland I asked my respondents to share their own religious views, tell more about religious traditions and practices they have in their life (if any), their experience of communicating with any religious organisations in Finland and the changes in their religious life (if they noticed any).

In the very beginning of this last part I asked my respondents if they considered themselves as religious person. I intentionally chose this term *religious*, that can have many shadows and meaning in Russian language, letting them distinguish and describe its meaning themselves. Twelve out of twenty-five immediately said ‘no’. And though most of them later told me about some religious traditions and practices, they all said that they don’t feel the faith inside and that all those religious attributes of their lives are just cultural phenomena.

Two people out of twenty-five gave neutral replies ‘не особо’ (not really) and ‘частично’ (partly). They both said that though they identify themselves as Orthodox, they do not feel any spiritual connection to church and religion does not play a big role in their lives. One respondent shared that she used to be religious in the past but did not feel that any more. Ten out of twenty-five said that they consider themselves as religious persons, and two of them emphasised that they did not feel as strong believers. I then asked those people who gave positive answers to describe what being religious meant for them. They named various things: living according to Orthodox commandments, visiting church, praying, having own faith

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<sup>104</sup> <http://www.uskotlahdessa.fi/index.php/ru/guide1/lahden-helluntaiseurakunta/>

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.lds.ru/hram-v-helsinki-finlyandiya>

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.jw.org/ru>

<sup>107</sup> <http://rus.adventist.fi/>

<sup>108</sup> <http://Iistina.wixsite.com/4you>

<sup>109</sup> <http://kovtcheg.org/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://vk.com/club81724979>

inside, attitude to the Bible, celebrating religious holidays, talking to God, living a good life, helping the others.

My religiosity is my connection to the Bible, how I understand it, what is Triune Godhead. Lutheranism is now the closest to me – Interview 3.

I don't feel any dedication. I do not keep the fast, because I believe my health is more important. I don't have strong wish to go to church. But I understand what the Bible's main idea is. I know that religion is a big part of our culture. But being in the church demands time and emotional efforts, which I do not have. But as it usually happens, I might feel that need at some bad moments of my life – Interview 4.

First of all, it is the faith that I feel inside. I understand that we all live for a reason. Today Hinduism is my religion. I believe in karma and that we are responsible for everything we did in our previous lives. Praying is important to me. But I do not keep fasts. And I am vegetarian. This is not only about my attitude to animals, this is a religious aspect for me – Interview 8.

I cannot say I am super religious, but I go to church from time to time – Interview 10.

I would say I have my own internal faith. It is not tied to any of denominations. I separate those things – Interview 19.

Some people say 'as God wishes', they somehow put the responsibility on the God. I believe a human creates its own destiny. I am not an expert in Orthodoxy, but I know a lot about traditions and holidays. I go to church sometimes – Interview 5.

I do not go to church every Sunday, maybe three times a year, but that is my religiosity – faith and church – Interview 16.

I am not a strong believer, but I believe in some higher power that rules this world. I am open-minded and tolerant, I find some interesting aspects in different denominations and cults. My own religion is mixture of faith and philosophy – Interview 24.

When we talked about my respondents' childhood and families, we discussed religious traditions they followed, holidays they celebrated and religious items they obtained. In this part of the interview we touched the same topics but with the focus on respondents themselves and their nowadays lives. Eight people said they did not have any religious items or attributes at home. Seventeen out of twenty-five (68%) had at least one item that could be considered as religious. Thirteen people keep Orthodox icons at home (most of them are presents from relatives and friends). Eight people wear close-to-skin cross constantly. Three people have Bibles at home, one respondent has the Quran (though never read that), one has Hindu goodness images and statues. Four people also said that they have religious attributes of other than their own denomination, that they purchased as souvenirs and were given as presents.

Eight of twenty-five respondents said they did not have any religious traditions or practices, while seventeen gave positive reply. Eleven of them said that they celebrate religious holidays, at the same time five people admitted that they do it mostly for their families and as a part of cultural traditions, without putting any specific religious meaning to them. Six respondents said that they went to church regularly and lighted the candles every time. Four people shared that they prayed almost every day. And two people told they met a priest for confessions and sacraments.

Many of the respondents told about religious holidays as part of their religious life. Only five people said they did not celebrate any of them. It should be noted that this number is

lower than the number of respondents who said they did not have any religious traditions. That can be explained by the fact that I have mentioned above – people inherit those traditions from their families as cultural events without specific religious meaning. Easter and Christmas are the most popular holidays for my respondents – each of them was named sixteen times, while twelve named both. Five people also named the Trinity Sunday, all Hindu holidays, all main Muslim holidays, Low Sunday.

We also discussed if my respondents experienced any changes in their ‘religious calendars’ after they moved to Finland. Ten people said that nothing changed, while fifteen gave positive reply. Seven people said that they started to celebrate Lutheran Christmas or Easter, mostly because they had days off from work and because the whole country celebrated that. Three people said they started to celebrate both Orthodox and Lutheran holidays. And five people admitted that they started to celebrate new holidays, that they did not have in their calendar before – Juhannus and Helatorstai.

I am interested in some traditions, like Christmas dinner, for example. I do not see it as pure religious aspect, it is also part of the cultural life – Interview 1.

I go to Christmas church concerts. I can go to any church, it does not have to be Orthodox. I just enjoy the atmosphere – Interview 3.

I do not think we should adopt our religious traditions. It is part of my own cultural identity. So, I still celebrate the Julian dates – Interview 8.

I think integration into new culture does not always mean you lose something from your own identity. It might also mean you gain something more. We now celebrate all the main holidays twice, according to different calendars. I like the idea of creating more nice moments for my family. Why would we skip the joy? – Interview 24.

I learned a lot about food traditions for different holidays. This was the starting point of me learning something new – Interview 7.

Churches and mosques play a significant role in religious life of an individual. Those are the places that can create a safe space to have a dialogue with God, to pray, to get some support and find people who share your beliefs. I asked my respondents if they had this tradition of going to church/ mosque before they moved to Finland, and if yes, do they keep doing that nowadays. Four out of twenty-five said they never visited churches for a religious purpose, it was always some interest and curiosity. Twelve people said that they used to go to church when they lived in Russia, but it was ‘редко’ (rarely). Ten people shared that visiting church was a usual practice for them when they lived in Russia.

It was important to find out if the situation changed after interviewees moved to Finland. Only one person said that she did not know anything about churches/ mosques in Helsinki and was never interested to learn more. Eleven people said that they were in local churches at least few times, but mostly as tourists. Thirteen people shared that visiting the church was their regular practice. If we compare that with the results above, we can see that for at least

three people going to church became more important after they moved to Finland. We also discussed what were the moments when people felt the need to be in a church. Twelve people said that usually it was something negative – loss of relatives, stress in private life, feeling lonely. Only for three of my respondents visiting church services was a routine practice and part of everyday life.

Now I feel bad, and I expect the church to play some therapeutic role in my life. I need to find some contact with God. It is always a quite and calm place that brings peace in my soul – Interview 1.

I go there when I experience some difficulties in my life. But sometimes I come there for no specific reason. I just feel I need to do that – Interview 10.

When I go to church, I do not like talking to other people. It is just me and the God, more like a meditation. But I remember when my father died I was standing there and crying. Many people asked what happened and offered their help – Interview 16.

Me and my kids have been to many services in different churches – Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic, Evangelical. I do not like Orthodox services because I hate the strong smell of the frankincense. We usually go there in time of big holidays. Most of the time I come there with good emotions and feeling of gratitude – Interview 24.

As many of my respondents mentioned that they were surprised to see how church and religious organisations were involved in everyday life in Finland, we touched that topic as well. I asked if they knew anything about social support provided by religious organisations. All of my respondents told that they knew about free food that you could get in some churches and special places. Fifteen of them said they did not need that kind of help, while ten admitted that they accepted that food support, especially right after they moved to Finland.

Social event organised by religious organisations might be one of the way for the smooth integration process. Ten out of twenty-five respondents said they attended some church charity concerts and dinners in Finland. Two people were in summer camps, organised by the Finnish Lutheran Church. However, none of my respondents knew anything about any integration support or any help oriented specifically on the immigrants. We also talked about the lack of information all respondents experienced when they moved in Finland. All the information they got was received from friends or demanded some efforts (mostly Internet search). I asked if any church or religious group tried to contact them in Finland. Five people gave negative replies. Twenty out of twenty-five (and that is remarkable 80%) were visited by Jehova's Witnesses, three were contacted by Mormons and Baptists. And those were the only religious groups who tried to make any contacts to my respondents.

In the end we talked about my respondents' own emotions and thoughts about role of the religion in their life before moving to Finland and the changes they experienced after the moving. Most of my respondents (fifteen out of twenty-five) said that religion in general did not play any significant role in their life when they lived in Russia. Four people used a neutral reply 'не особо' (not really). Six people told that religion was an important part of their life.

All respondents admitted that they learned more about other religions in general by meeting people from all over the world. However, eleven respondents told that they did not experience any changes considering their own religious life after they moved to Finland. Five of them told that it did not play any role in their life before and that they did not even think about turning to religion after they moved. Other seven just mentioned that their religious needs and traditions stayed on the same level. Fourteen people admitted that there were some changes. Six respondents told that they became less religious, which meant lose of interest towards religion, focusing on other life aspects, not going to the church as often as they used to. Eight people said that they feel that their religious life became more visible and active, some of them also mentioned that church community and support helped them in their adaptation period.

I feel I drifted away from church. I do not feel any interest any more – Interview 6.

Church became a significant part of my life. Here I met my future husband and most of my friends. I cannot imagine my life without their support – Interview 3.

I can say that on the contrast with my life in Russia, here finally I started my religious search. Church became a place for me where people are glad to see you. They do not care where you came from, what language do you speak, are you baptised or not. This a nice place where I like to come – Interview 24.

I started to visit church services regularly, because my wife's stepfather is a priest. For me the church is part of Russian community, though it is not Orthodox – Interview 12.

I think I am not that much focused on church rules any more. There are much less frames in Finland, you are freer to behave in the church. It does not matter what do you believe in you can come to any church and just sit down and pray. No one is judging you – Interview 18.

It was not easy to point out any tendencies in my respondents replies on their own religious life. Most of the questions divided all respondents into two more or less equal groups with small neutral answers in the middle. Only half of the interviewees identified themselves as religious persons. Though the number of people who celebrated religious holidays or obtained religious items was higher. Only six people said that religion played a significant role in their life in Russia. However, eight respondents marked that their religious life became more active after they moved to Finland. Most of the interviewees admitted that they felt lack of information about opportunities to fulfil their spiritual needs. Jehova's Witnesses and Mormons were the only religious organisations that put a lot of efforts in trying to build a contact with my respondents.

Religiosity is hard to be measured. The simplest way might be just counting the church attendance. However, the individual rituals and practices can be more significant. It is not easy to evaluate or measure or estimate some phenomena when you have only text to apply to. That is why I referred to the coding system of interview analyses (Appendix, Table 8). I chosen those questions that could have simple and straight replies (yes/no or adverbs). I used data from my tables with simplified answers (Appnedix, Tables 4-7). Each answer got own

score. Thus, in the first table (Family religious background and own religiosity) all positive replies or absolutely positive replies got two points. One point was for the more neutral answers, zero – for the negative ones. In this tables questions on family background were combined with questions on own religious views. It let me to ‘evaluate’ my respondents’ religiosity.

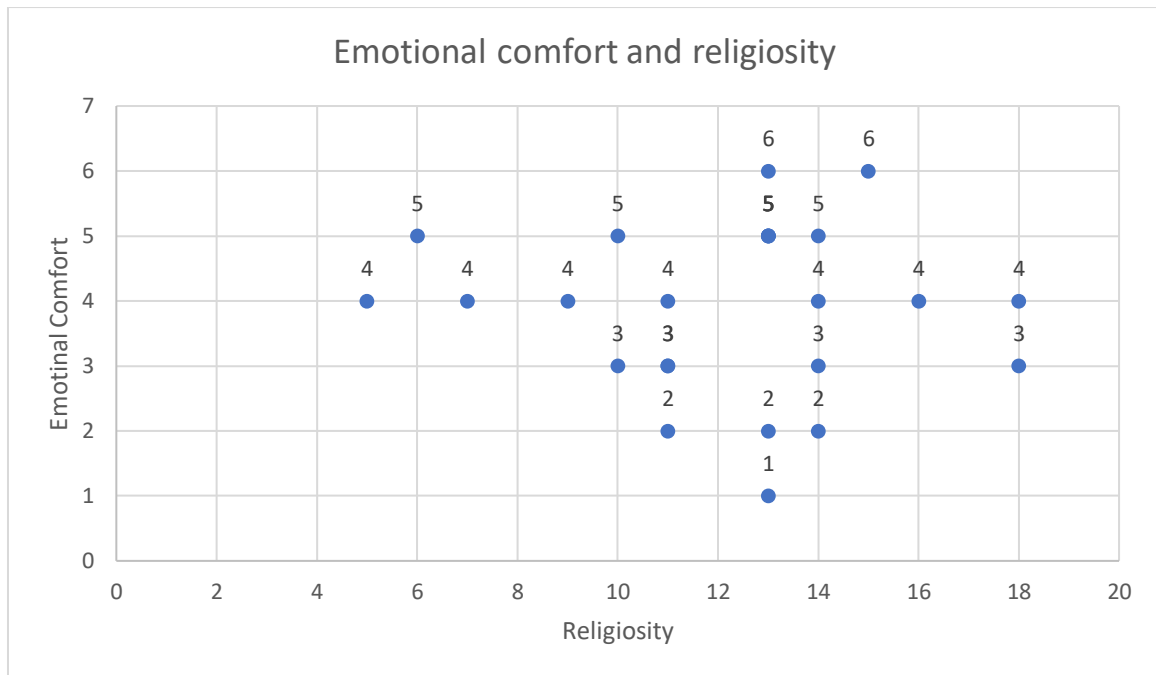
The maximum number of scores one could get was 20 (which meant that all the family members and individual were baptised or belonged to denomination, they regularly visited church or mosque or any religious organisation, they followed their own religious traditions and transferred them to the next generation). Two of my respondents showed high level of religiosity (18 points), three – quite low (5-7 points out of 20). Nineteen out of twenty-five (76%) showed results over 10 points, proving that religion in general and religious traditions are presented in their lives. None of the respondents got zero level result, the minimum was 5 points, which proves that it is hard to find any Russian person with totally zero religiosity, and even if individual identify him/herself as atheist, the religious traditions may still run in the family.

After all the work done I still wondered is there any place for religion in the process of integration for Russian immigrants in Finland. I created one more scoring table (Appendix, Table 9), where I tried to evaluate my interviewees level of satisfaction of their life in Finland (and their socialisation in particular). Such questions *as How do you feel yourself in Finland, Do you feel lonely, Do you miss Russia, Do you feel socialised* were included in the selection. I tried to estimate the ‘positive’ attitude, that is why, in some questions ‘no’ reply got one score, and in the question about general feeling any adverb with positive shadow was scored with one point.

The maximum scores in this section was six. Only two respondents got this result, expressing their satisfaction of their life in Finland and the level of their socialisation. None of the respondents got zero level of comfort. Sixteen out of twenty-five (64%) showed results over three points, proving that more than a half of my target group is in general highly satisfied with their life in Finland. However, four people got only 1-2 point results, expressing that they face some difficulties in their socialisation in Finnish society.

After scoring all respondents with points in two tables, I could create a simple spots system with two axes (religiosity and life comfort/satisfaction) for all the respondents participated in my research.





From this graph I saw that religiosity seems to be not playing any significant role in individual satisfaction of level of socialisation and integration. Respondents with the highest and the lowest levels of estimated religiosity showed the same high level of own satisfaction. At the same time, people with the same level of religiosity showed different levels of personal comfort in Finland. I then applied cross-analysis, trying to take into consideration other factors. I have made a conclusion that level of personal satisfaction and successful integration does depend on number of aspects, such as family being close to you, ability to find new friends, friendly and supportive working and studying environment. And although religious traditions and practices do not play the leading role in the process of socialisation and integration for most of the respondents, they still stay significant for some part of the group. Most of the respondents somehow expressed their wish to have more active social and cultural life, but very few of them thought about religious organisations as a place where they could get that opportunity. That made me do some extra work that I will describe in the last subchapter.

#### 6.5 Churches activities (Extra interviews).

Some scholars have already studied the question of religious assimilation and its ability to influence the inclusion of an individual in the social networks and civic institutions. P.G. Min who examined Korean church in the United States argued that religious organisations might provide social service resources, such as help with learning the local language and the citizenship examination. Furthermore, religiosity might affect the political incorporation – the research of Asian Americans by Pei-Te Lien showed that religiously involved people were

more likely to vote due to the higher feel of social responsibility. Same attitude reason in bigger involvement in volunteering activities<sup>111</sup>.

Already after first few interviews and thinking about my own observations, I started to see the tendency of lack of information about religious life in Finland or ‘information vacuum’ Russian immigrants experienced after they moved to Finland. I did not hear neither from my interviewees nor from my friends about any groups or meeting organised by any religious organisation that would be oriented on immigrants and their spiritual needs. I have decided to talk to some representatives of churches to ask them if there is any work they do with Russian immigrants of the new wave.

The clear majority of my respondents named Jehova’s Witnesses as the organisation who tried hard to make contacts to them. They saw those people on the streets, they received some brochures by post. Eighteen of my respondents were visited by JW at home, and in seventeen cases those people were Russian speakers. And although none of my interviewees expressed neither interest, nor intention to join the organisation, I thought these efforts were already worth noticing.

I tried to contact some official representative of JW through phone, but never got a reply. Then I just talked to few members on a street. They preferred to stay anonymous. All of them said that missionary and spreading the word of God are part of their duties. They got the tasks to do door-to-door evangelizing and they created the data bases with the names of tenants that they updated regularly. Simply by reading the names on the doors they could send Russian speaking members to Russian families. None of them new anything about specific program of support oriented on the immigrants. However, they mentioned some charity activities that were supposed to help Middle Eastern refugees.

The second interview I managed to organise was with Anna Lewing, who is a Russian speaking pastor of the Finnish Lutheran Church. Anna conducts Lutheran services in Russian language and is responsible for working with Russian speaking members of the commune. The pastor told me a lot about the work they organise. Apart from church services, the commune holds summer camps and educational groups for the youth. They conduct seminars, communication skills trainings, family camps, concerts and celebrations, Bible groups, dancing club and many other events that are free to join.

Anna also told me about ways of spreading the information about their work. They post all the information on their website and send it to the email address they have in their data base

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<sup>111</sup> Cadge W., Ecklud E.H. Immigration and Religion.

(which is limited, because all those email holders need to give their own approve to be included in the list). Commune also cooperates with Russian mass media, such as newspaper *Spectrum*. However, she admitted that these ways seem to be not enough to engage new church members, especially among young immigrants. Anna wishes they could have more resources (both financial and human) to use social media more actively and draw attention to their events.

Anna has been working in the church for more than twenty years. During this time, she did not see any significant change in the number of new members of the commune. It stays on the same level. And even if they try to use modern technologies of spreading the information, the most popular channel is still ‘сарафанное радио’ (word of mouth), which means people receive information from their friends and relatives. And of course, that automatically excludes the group of new-comers, who simply do not have a lot of friends and have to experience living in this ‘information vacuum’.

It was important for me to hear the position of Russian Orthodox Church, as most of my interviewees identified them as Orthodox and none belonged to the Finnish Orthodox Church. I met Archpriest Victor Lyutik, rector of the Patriarchal Parishes in Finland and Sweden. I cannot say that the interview went according to my initial plan. Victor told a lot about relations between Moscow Patriarchate and Finnish Lutheran and Finnish Orthodox churches and about history of the Russian Orthodox parishes in Finland. He also shared some information about the members of the parishes. Victor has been living in Finland for thirty-four years and he claims that people tend to turn to the church at the older age. He does not see any big interest to Orthodoxy among the youth.

If someone is looking for the church, he will always find it. The deeper people think, the more obvious it comes to them that life without the church does not make sense. Orthodoxy is strong because of its traditions. We are not playing with society, we do not try to be popular. We are true - Archpriest Victor Lyutik.

Victor also mentioned that he saw that being a member of Orthodox church for many immigrants is part of their cultural self-identity, something that help them not to lose connection to their historical roots. The parish conduct the church services, family events, children summer camps. They do not put a goal to gain as many new members as possible, because missionary is not their main aim. They do not advertise their events and prefer to have less but stronger believing members. At the same time all the fathers are ready to provide any help and support if they asked to.

## 7. Conclusion and Discussions.

Immigration is never an easy process. Even if the decision to leave one's native country was not forced, and an immigrant did not experience any life threat, there are always some stressful or negative factors behind that decision. Russian immigrants in Finland is not a new phenomenon. The flow of resettles was part of relations between two neighbour countries. However, during the last decades the new immigration wave has brought the biggest in history number of Russian speakers in Finland.

The target group of my research included young new-comers from Russian who moved to Finland three-five years ago. During twenty-five interviews conducted in Helsinki region the new data on religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland was collected and analysed. Most of the interviewees self-identified themselves as Russian Orthodox, though the group also included atheists, Lutherans and Hindu.

Results of different surveys conducted in Russia during last year's shows one interesting detail – the number of people calling themselves Orthodox Christians exceeds the number of those identifying themselves as believers<sup>112</sup>. Which means that certain percentage identify themselves with Orthodox culture than with Orthodox Christianity. I would like to quote ROC Synode representative Kishidze: “Any state where for a long time – centuries or millenniums – a religious commune exists, belonging is also on the civilizational level. Thus, when a person says he is Orthodox, it means that Orthodox civilisation is a valuable for him and is a part of his identity”<sup>113</sup>.

The results of my research prove the same. Most of Russian immigrants in Finland consider themselves Orthodox in more general cultural sense. The majority was baptised before they turned ten years old and that was initiated by their parents or other relatives. Most of the respondents' families have own religious traditions and practices, especially older generation. However, while talking about nowadays life less people tend to call themselves religious or believing. Their self-identification as Orthodox often stay nominal, they do not consider themselves as strong believers.

I believe that only generation of our grandparents can be called religious. I cannot say the same about my generation. Religion is trendy, but nobody understands its true meaning – Interview 9.

If I swipe my Instagram on Christmas, it seems all friends are such strong believers. But if I ask when then talked to priest for the last time, no one did. Same thing with fasting – Interview 18.

People are like kids, they see everything so bright and golden in the church. They even pretend they pray. But that is not true. They even do not know any pray by heart – Interview 7.

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<sup>112</sup> Sinelina Y. The dynamics of Orthodox and Muslim religiosity in Russia, 1989-2012, *Religion, State and Society*, 43:3, P. 297.

<sup>113</sup> Skripunov A. “Index of the Faith”: How Many Orthodox are indeed in Russia?  
<https://ria.ru/20170823/1500891796.html>

Even Easter and Christmas have lost its religious meaning for most of my respondents. It is obvious that older generation did not transfer their religious views and practices to the younger generation. That partly can be explained by the atheistic policy promoted by the communist party for many decades. Similar conclusion is made by Maija Turunen, who says that the changing periods of Russia's religious history have had an influence on the nature of religiosity among Russia's youth.

Praying, going to the church, church services disappeared from people daily routine. Older generation still followed their family traditions but did not share that with their children and grandchildren. However, another reason of the faith crises among younger generation can be hidden in the crises of trust in Russian progressive society towards the church as an institute and discrediting behaving of some Orthodox priests.

I see that today there less people trust the church. All those crimes. It is widely discussed on telegram what kind of prosperous life our patriarch (Kirill) has. Older generation does not surf on the net. But younger people treat that with sarcasm and irony. It is hard to raise the new generation as strong believers – Interview 5.

Most of the interviewees did not inherit strong religious traditions from their families. However, visiting the church regularly was a usual practice for ten respondents out of the twenty-five. At the same time, they tend not to pass their religious views to their children, less than a half of respondents expressed intention to baptise their kids, letting them make own choices. For the majority of interviewees individual religiosity did not influence their choice neither of the life partner nor of the close friends.

All the interviewees had own various reasons to leave Russia. Education was chosen by most of them as a 'tool' of immigration, other entered Finland on bases of their work or family ties. Religious aspect was not considered as a significant and did not impact their decision. None of my respondents expressed any negative emotions while answering the question about how they feel themselves in Finland. However, more than a half of interviewees admitted that they experienced feel of loneliness or lost, that sometimes they still miss their relatives and friends. More than a half of respondents were satisfied with tempo of their social life and feeling of integration. At the same time twenty-one out of twenty-five admitted that they would like to participate in a bigger number of social events.

When I asked my interviewees about their nowadays religious life it was important for me to follow some changes they experienced while being in the immigrant status. I wondered if people show tendency to become more or less religious in new life circumstances and under the pressure of challenges they face. Eleven out of twenty-five said they did not feel any

significant difference in their spiritual needs. However, fourteen people noticed some changes. At the same time, they divided into two almost equal groups – eight people believed they became more religious, while six felt they lost some spiritual connection and religion became less important to them.

Scoring analyses did not show any straight relations or influence between religiosity and satisfaction of socialisation. The data of my research proves that in general religion does not play the leading role in life of Russian immigrants in Finland. However, religious practices and traditions are presented. Thirteen out of the twenty-five said they went to church in Finland regularly. Few people even admitted that church played an important role in their integration process.

I know that many of my Russian friends here became more religious after they moved in Finland. I guess it is somehow connected to the difficulties they faced here – Interview 1.

For many their faith is a social aspect. They need that support. Even if they are not strong believers, they are not forced. And even if he is not a member of the church he meets new friends. He does not feel lonely, he gets some inspiration and cultural experience – Interview 4.

When I have some bad moments, I just go to the chapel in Kamppi. I like the fact that nobody is talking to me, I still can feel that connection to those people – Interview 18.

I sometimes go to the Lutheran services. I meet new people. And you know reading the Bible in Finnish is a good practice for me – Interview 23.

Those people in the church, they seemed to be honestly glad to see me – Interview 24.

My research was one more attempt to explore the life of Russian immigrants in Finland. It was important that it was conducted in Russian language, that helped to create a comfortable atmosphere for all the respondents. I have already presented the results and the sum up of my research, but I would also like to put some more general conclusions.

First, religion does play a significant role for the part of Russian immigrants in Finland, staying however more on practical than spiritual level (such as religious traditions and practices, religious items and holidays).

Second, Orthodoxy is one of the fundamental aspects of self-identifications by Russians in general. However, it does not always mean the believing and stays more on the cultural level. Which is close to the conclusion of Doctor Storm, who claimed that religion can become an expression of national belonging, conformity to social norm or conservative values<sup>114</sup>.

Third, Russian immigrants show the tendency of assimilation in religious life, which is expressed mostly in adding or even replacing the religious holidays in their calendars, or sometimes even in changing the denomination. In addition, they are willing to learn more about the local culture.

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<sup>114</sup> Storm I. Does religion matter for attitudes towards immigration?

Fourth, Russian immigrants are experiencing the vacuum of information about activities of religious organisations, though some of them might see church or any other religious space as a place of support or help in their integration process. Similar result was shown by the research of Evelliina Heino and Minna Veistilä, which revealed the situations with lack of social support and isolation of Russian young people in Finland.

Russian immigrants of the new wave tend to successfully integrate into society, mostly through education, work and marriages. If we refer to the table created by professor Berry, I would claim that Russian immigrants in Finland are on the stage of Integration, when an Individual wants to maintain his original culture and on the other hand shows an interest in learning the host culture. And if we look at the seven stages of assimilation by Gordon<sup>115</sup>, we can see that Russian immigrants in Finland experience acculturation (adopting language, dress, and daily customs of the host society), as well as Identification assimilation, when the minority feels bonded to the dominant culture.

According to Kolsto, in complicated circumstances of immigration the diaspora could be said to be confronted with the choice of three identities: identification with the dominant culture in the external homeland (= Russia); development of a new but still basically Russian self-identification, and identification with the dominant culture in the state of residence (=the new nationalizing state). I would say that in everyday life I do see all three choices made here in Finland. Depending, on duration of living here, on possible way of moving, depending on family ties or on the contrary the lack of these ties, people tend to choose what is closer to them. I know dozens of Russians who have been living in Helsinki for more than ten years and still barely speak Finnish and don't even make little effort to learn, functioning primarily in Russian. At the same time, I meet some families (mostly intercultural), where people barely speak Russian, do not travel to neighbor Russia for decades and even sometimes feel ashamed of being born as a Russian.

Integration process is not easy in many aspects. I must say that Finnish government does a lot to support new-comers and provide them a good living standard. However, they still face lots of physiological and cultural challenges. And this is the area where religious organisations could provide their support. Apart from all the work local churches and religious organisations are already doing, I would like to present some more ideas and recommendations that could improve their connection to the immigrants:

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<sup>115</sup> Gordon M. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*. Oxford University Press, 1964 – P. 46.

- Become more visible, do not ignore social media and high technologies. The world develops fast and it should be taken into consideration. Immigrants do not always have friends who could tell them about coming events
- Organise some events oriented specifically on immigrants, which could include some language practice or cultural education
- Use the volunteers to share their experience that could help new-comers to adopt to new realities
- Offer psychological help for the new-comers
- Organise more events, not necessarily religious, where people could feel some peace while talking native language
- Be more open-minded and try not to convert new-comers, start with creating a safe space and ask about their needs.

There are still many directions and angles to study religious life of Russian immigrants in Finland. Other age groups could be studied in the same segment – relations between immigrations and religion. It would be interesting to compare results of two different generations. Other ways of integration of immigrants (not only Russian) in Finland could be also a good topic for a new research. The other side of integration process (the attitude of local population towards the immigrants) would be one more possible way of exploring the phenomenon. Immigration in comparatively large scale is a process new for Finland, and this field is open to be studied.

Successful integration means finding a fragile balance between assimilation and preservation of cultural self-identity. Religion as part of cultural heritage of an individual can be a way of expressing and transfer of one's ethnic and cultural self-identification. Just as religion furnishes elements with which to create alternative cartographies, so it guides believers about their rights and responsibilities in the communities where they belong. Religious institutions differ from other immigrant institutions in that they see themselves as the living embodiment of universal and timeless truths. They provide members with moral compasses and orient them to act upon these values in particular settings<sup>116</sup>.

In the end, successful integration of immigrants is for the benefit of the whole society. Marginalised immigrants, who have lost their social connections can become a threat, while socialised immigrants can contribute to the welfare of the state and raise their children as rightful members of the society. Integration process demands much work done by an

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<sup>116</sup> Levitt P. *Between God, Ethnicity, And Country: An Approach To The Study Of Transnational Religion*.



individual, as well as strong support from the government. And religious organisation can also contribute into these common efforts. Being a part of religious community can not only provide a phycological comfort and support, but also help people with everyday needs such as housing, jobs, business opportunities, marriages. It might create the safe space for the benefits of an individual and for the society in a bigger scale.

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### **Interviews.**

Interview 1, Sofia, 27.03.18 – 6 pages.

Interview 2, Ivan, 14.04.18 – 6 pages.

Interview 3, Darja, 21.04.18 – 7 pages.

Interview 4, Alexandra, 28.04.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 5, Julia, 03.05.18 – 8 pages.

Interview 6, Andrei, 19.05.18 – 4 pages.

Interview 7, Tina, 22.05.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 8, Alena, 24.05.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 9, Anastasia, 30.05.18 – 8 pages.

Interview 10, Larisa, 04.09. 18 – 7 pages.

Interview 11, Karina, 12.09.18 – 4 pages.

Interview 12, Vladislav, 30.09.18 – 6 pages.

Interview 13, Ksenia, 22.11.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 14, Anton, 22.11.18 – 4 pages.

Interview 15, Slava, 23.11.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 16, Valeria, 24.11.18 – 7 pages.

Interview 17, Olga, 30.11.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 18, Oksana, 01.12.18 – 8 pages.

Interview 19, Natalia, 03.12.18 – 6 pages.

Interview 20, Albina, 02.11.18 – 4 pages.

Interview 21, Pavel, 28.10.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 22, Artem, 01.11.18 – 3 pages.

Interview 23, Ekaterina, 15.10.18 – 8 pages.

Interview 24, Anastasia, 17.09.18 – 8 pages.

Interview 25, anonymous, 08.10.18 – 5 pages.

Interview 26, Jehova's Witnesses member, 02.12.18 – 2 pages.

Interview 27, Anna Lewing, 20.11. 18 – 6 pages.

Interview 28, Victor Lyutik. 08.12.18 – 3 pages of notes, the interview was not recorded.

Fieldnotes – 7 pages

## **Appendix.**

### **Questionnaire (Translated from Russian).**

#### **1. Personal information.**

Gender

Age

Place of birth (Country and city)

Occupation. Level of education

#### **2. Childhood and family.**

Do you think that your family can be considered as religious?

Are you baptised? If yes, in which confession? If yes, at what age were you baptised? Who are your godparents, how they were chosen? If no, have you ever thought about being baptised?

Are your parents and grandparents baptised?

Is your wife/husband or girlfriend/boyfriend baptised? Was it an important factor when you chose your partner?

Are your kids baptised? Who are their godparents? How did you choose them? If you don't have kids yet, have you ever thought would you like your future kids to be baptised?

Do your relatives go to church/ mosque or any other religious organisation or place? Did you relatives bring you church/ mosque or any other religious organisation or place when you were a kid?

Do your relatives celebrate any religious events or holidays?

Do your relatives follow any religious traditions? (For instance, baptism, church wedding, funeral service).

Are there any religious people among your friends? Do they know anything about your religious life? What is their attitude towards it? Does it affect your friendship?

Do you have any religious education? (For example, lessons at school, church lessons, university course, self-education).

#### **3. Your life in Finland.**

How long have you been living in Finland?

Why and how did you move to the country?

Did you try to learn anything about religious life in Finland before you moved here?

Was it a significant factor for you when you made your decision on the moving?

Have you changed your picture of religious life and traditions in Finland after you moved here? Have you learned anything new?

How do you feel in Finland?

Do you miss Russia?

Do you feel lonely sometimes?

Do you feel yourself socialised? Are you a member of any group or community (not necessarily religious)?

#### **4. Your faith.**

Do you think you are a religious person?

If yes, what does it mean to you?

Do you follow any religious traditions?

Do you have any religious items at home (For example. icons, cross, The Bible)?

Do you celebrate any religious holidays or events? Did you have that tradition before the moving? Have you started to celebrate any new holidays?

Did religion play a significant role in your life before you moved to Finland?

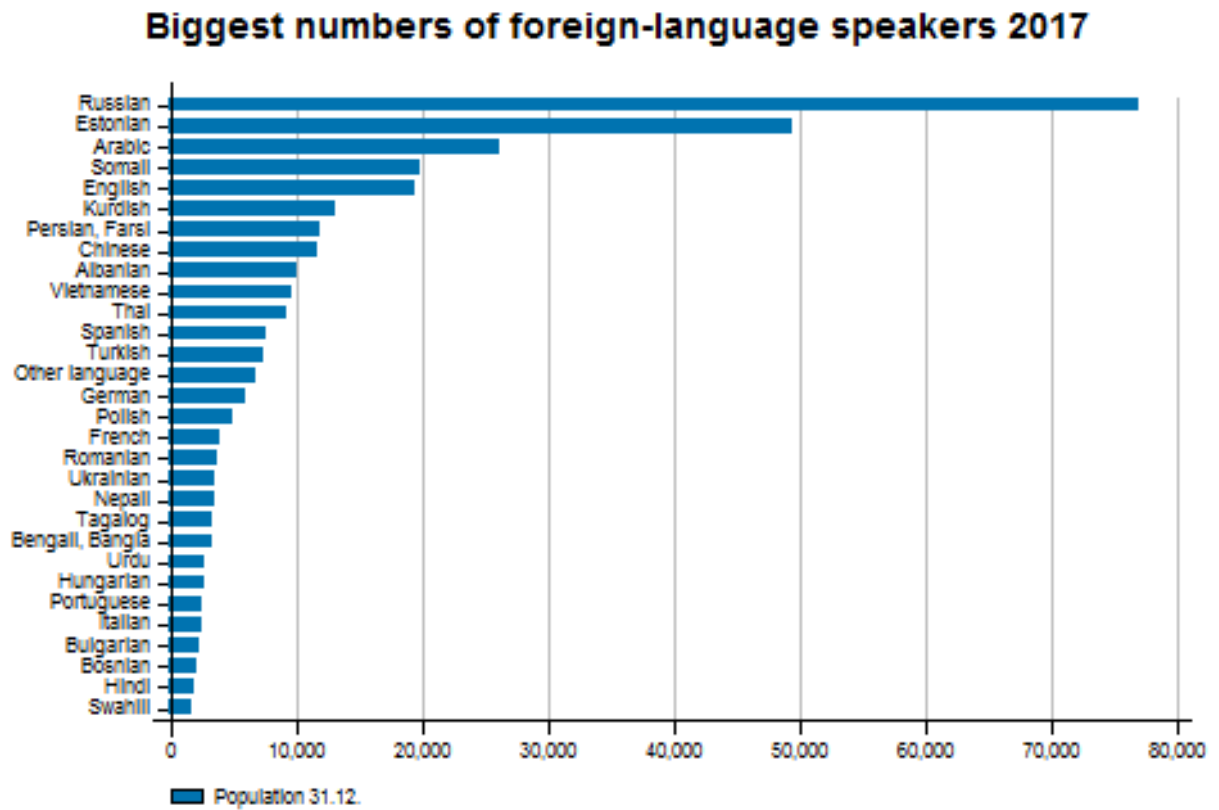
Did you visit church/ mosque or any other religious organisation or place back in Russia?

Do you know anything about churches/ mosques or any other religious organisations or places in Finland/ in Helsinki? Do you know their addresses? Do you visit any of them? If yes, when/ at what moment of your life do you feel you need to visit them?

It is well known that religious and church organisations in Finland provide a lot of charity and social help to different social groups. Have you ever asked for such help? Have any of religious organisations tried to contact you? Have they offered any help in adopting to new life circumstances? If yes, could you tell more about that. If no, would you like to get that kind of help?

Do you think your religious life has changed after you moved to Finland? Do you feel you would like to make some changes?

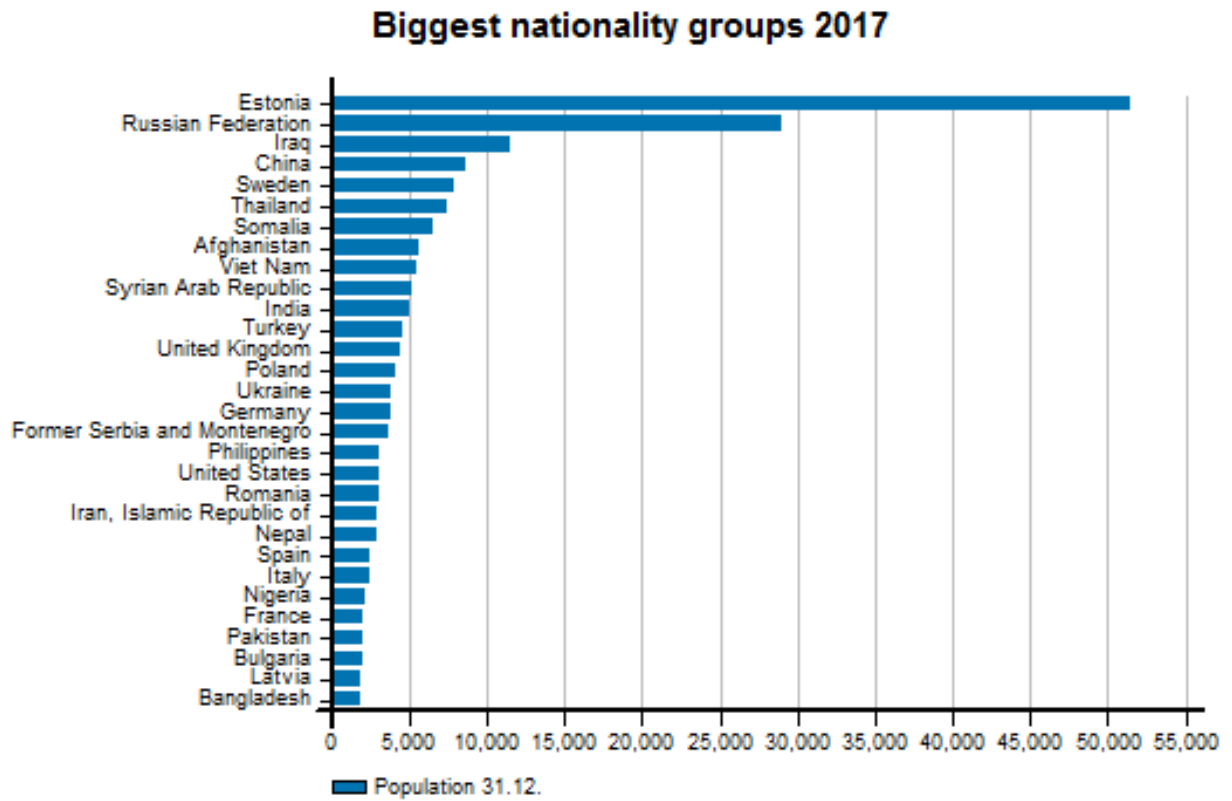
**Table 1. Biggest numbers of foreign languages in Finland (2017).**



Statistics Finland / Population structure

From the StatisticsFinland website - [http://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/vieraskieliset\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/vieraskieliset_en.html)

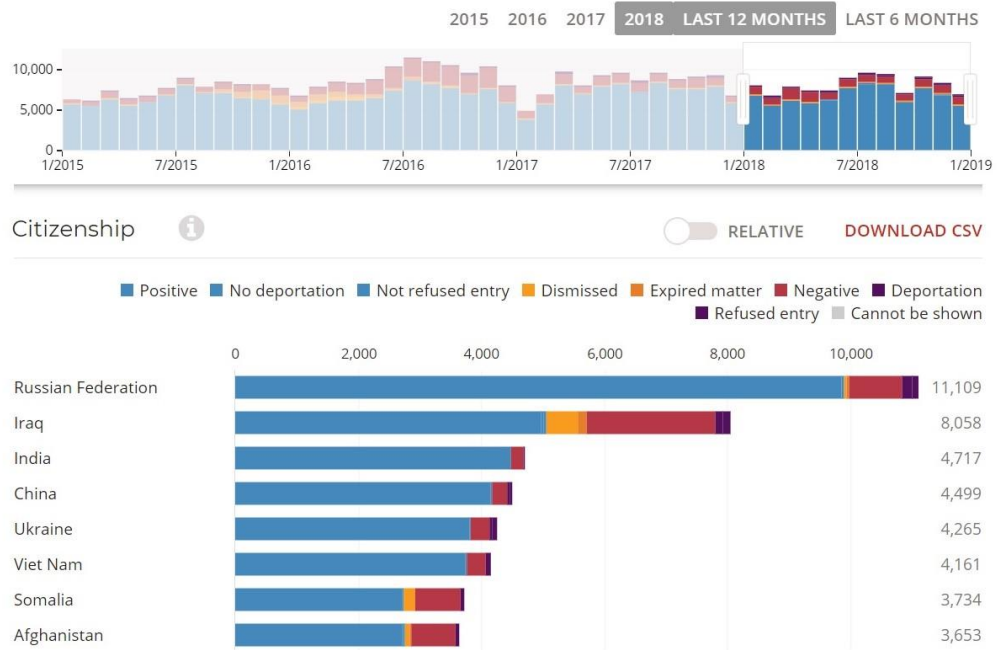
**Table 2. Biggest nationality groups in Finland (2017).**



Statistics Finland / Population structure

From the StatisticsFinland website - [http://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/ulkomaan-kansalaiset\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/ulkomaan-kansalaiset_en.html)

**Table 3. Citizenship applications (2018).**



From official webpage of Finnish Immigration Service - <http://tilastot.migri.fi/#decisions?l=en>



**Table 4. Interviews. Section 2. Family background. Part 1.**

Question	Age	Is your family religious	Are you baptised/belong to any religion	In what denomination	When it happened	Who are your godparents	Are you in touch now
Interview 1	30	Partly yes	yes	Orthodoxy	12 y	cousin	yes
Interview 2	30	no	yes	Orthodoxy	8-9 y	Mom's friend	no
Interview 3	20	No	yes	Orthodoxy	2 months	Family friend	A little
Interview 4	23	Yes	yes	Orth., now Lutheran	12 y	No	-
Interview 5	29	Not really	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 3 y	grandparents	yes
Interview 6	27	no	yes	Orthodoxy	10 y	Mom's friend	no
Interview 7	20	Not really	yes	Orthodoxy	5 months	Mom's friend	yes
Interview 8	27	no	yes	Orth, now Hindu	5-6 y	no	-
Interview 9	29	no	yes	Orthodoxy	10 y	uncle	yes
Interview 10	23	no	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 2 y	Mom's friend	no
Interview 11	20	yes	yes	Orthodoxy	11-12 y	Mom's friend	no
Interview 12	25	Mostly yes	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 1 y	grandparents	yes
Interview 13	29	Well yes	yes	Orthodoxy	9 y	uncle	yes
Interview 14	30	No	yes	Orthodoxy	6 y	Sisters friend	no
Interview 15	30	Yes	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 1 y	Mom's friend	no
Interview 16	30	No	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 1 y	relatives	yes
Interview 17	29	No	no	-	-	-	-
Interview 18	30	No	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 2 y	relatives	no
Interview 19	26	No	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 1 y	no	-
Interview 20	25	Yes	Raised as Muslim	Islam	Since birth	-	-
Interview 21	30	Yes	yes	Orthodoxy	7 y	relatives	yes
Interview 22	27	No	yes	Orthodoxy	Under 5 y	no	-
Interview 23	24	No	yes	Orthodoxy	18 y	no	-
Interview 24	27	No	no	-	-	-	-
Interview 25	28	No	yes	Orthodoxy	2 y	Mom's friend	no

Question	Age	Are your parents baptised/belong to any religion	Are your parents baptised/belong to any religion
Interview 1	30	no	yes
Interview 2	30	yes	no
Interview 3	20	yes	yes
Interview 4	23	yes	yes
Interview 5	29	I don't know	yes
Interview 6	27	yes	yes
Interview 7	20	Mom yes	yes
Interview 8	27	yes	yes
Interview 9	29	yes	yes
Interview 10	23	yes	yes
Interview 11	20	yes	yes
Interview 12	25	yes	yes
Interview 13	29	Mom yes	yes
Interview 14	30	Mom yes	yes
Interview 15	30	Yes	yes
Interview 16	30	yes	no
Interview 17	29	Yes	Yes
Interview 18	30	yes	yes
Interview 19	26	yes	yes
Interview 20	25	They are Muslims	They are Muslims
Interview 21	30	yes	yes
Interview 22	27	yes	yes
Interview 23	24	yes	yes
Interview 24	27	no	yes
Interview 25	28	yes	yes

**Table 5. Interviews. Section 2. Family background. Part 2.**

Question	Does your partner belong to religion	Was his/her religious views important for you	Are your kids baptised? Do you plan to do that in the future?	Do your relatives go to church?	Did they bring you to church in the childhood?
Interview 1	no	Important that no	I don't know	No	rarely
Interview 2	no	Important that no	no	Rarely	no
Interview 3	yes	Yes, met at church	Yes	rarely	rarely
Interview 4	-	yes	No, they will decide	yes	rarely
Interview 5	yes	no	I want	rarely	yes
Interview 6	-	no	I don't know	no	rarely
Interview 7	yes	no	no	sometimes	no
Interview 8	yes	yes	no	rarely	Yes
Interview 9	yes	no	yes	rarely	rarely
Interview 10	-	yes	I don't know	rarely	rarely
Interview 11	-	no	No	yes	rarely
Interview 12	yes	yes	No	no	yes
Interview 13	yes	no	Yes	rarely	rarely
Interview 14	yes	no	Yes	rarely	rarely
Interview 15	-	I don't know	No	no	sometimes
Interview 16	-	no	I don't know	rarely	no
Interview 17	yes	no	I don't know	Not often	no
Interview 18	yes	no	I plan to	Not often	sometimes
Interview 19	-	no	No	yes	rarely
Interview 20	no	no	No	Yes, mosque	often
Interview 21	-	no	I don't know	rarely	rarely
Interview 22	no	no	No	yes	rarely
Interview 23	yes	no	Yes	rarely	rarely
Interview 24	no	no	No	sometimes	No
Interview 25	yes	no	I don't know	rarely	rarely

**Table 5. Interviews. Section 2. Family background. Part 2.**

Question	Does your family celebrate religious holidays?	Does your family possess religious items?	Does your family follow religious traditions?	Do you have religious education?	Do you have religious friends?
Interview 1	Easter	Yes, icons	yes	Course at university	few
Interview 2	Easter	no	no	Course at university	yes
Interview 3	Easter	Yes, icons	yes	uskonto	Most of all
Interview 4	Easter, Christmas, Fests	no	Yes	Course at university	yes
Interview 5	Easter, Christmas, Trinity	Yes, icons	Yes	Own interest	Not close
Interview 6	Easter	no	Yes	no	yes
Interview 7	Easter	Yes, icons	Yes	Lessons at school	yes
Interview 8	Easter	Yes, icons	Yes	Course at university	some
Interview 9	Easter	Yes, icons	Yes	no	no
Interview 10	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	Yes	School lessons	yes
Interview 11	Easter	no	no	no	Not much
Interview 12	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	Yes	Own interest	yes
Interview 13	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	No	School lessons	Not close
Interview 14	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	no	School lessons	no
Interview 15	Easter, Christmas	no	no	Own interest	yes
Interview 16	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	Yes	Course at university	yes
Interview 17	no	no	no	Course at university	yes
Interview 18	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	Yes	no	yes
Interview 19	Easter	Yes, icons	Yes	Course at university	no
Interview 20	All Muslim dates	Quran	Yes	Home education	no
Interview 21	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	no	Course at university	no
Interview 22	Easter, Christmas	Yes, red corner	no	School lessons	I don't know
Interview 23	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	Yes	Course at university	yes
Interview 24	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	no	Course at university	yes
Interview 25	Easter, Christmas	Yes, icons	no	Course at university	no

**Table 6. Interviews. Section 3. Life in Finland.**

Question	How many years are you in Finland?	What was the basis for the move?	Did you search for info about religion in F.?	Was it an important factor?	Did you learn anything new?
Interview 1	4	After the husband	As part of culture	no	Yes, new holidays
Interview 2	5	PhD	no	no	Yes, sects
Interview 3	4	education	Common knowledge	Yes, freedom	Yes, I am now Lutheran
Interview 4	3	After the husband	no	no	Yes, churches
Interview 5	5	work	Knew through friends	no	Yes, churches
Interview 6	3	parents	no	no	Yes, books
Interview 7	3	After the husband	no	no	Yes, taxes, charity
Interview 8	3	work	no	no	yes
Interview 9	4	education	no	no	Yes, cemeteries
Interview 10	5	education	no	no	Yes, calendar
Interview 11	4	education	Common knowledge	no	no
Interview 12	4	education	no	no	Yes. A lot
Interview 13	5	education	Common knowledge	no	no
Interview 14	5	education	no	no	Yes, food traditions
Interview 15	5	parents	no	no	Yes, churches
Interview 16	5	education	no	no	Yes, holidays
Interview 17	4	work	no	no	Yes, sects
Interview 18	5	education	Common knowledge	no	Yes, churches
Interview 19	3	education	no	no	Yes, holidays
Interview 20	3	education	no	no	no
Interview 21	5	education	no	no	Yes, traditions
Interview 22	3	education	Common knowledge	Yes, secular	no
Interview 23	3	education	no	no	Yes, churches
Interview 24	4	education	Common knowledge	no	Yes, traditions
Interview 25	5	education	no	no	no

Question	How do you feel yourself in Finland?	Do you feel lonely?	Do you miss Russia?	Are you socialised enough?	Would you like to have more socialisation?
Interview 1	normally	sometimes	Yes, friends	Yes, family	yes
Interview 2	Good, well	No, I have my wife	no	Yes, friends	no
Interview 3	perfectly	sometimes	Yes, family	Yes, church, sport	Yes, cultural events
Interview 4	Better than in Russia	Not really	no	yes	no
Interview 5	well	no	sometimes	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 6	good	no	Yes, friends	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 7	good	no	no	Yes, friends	no
Interview 8	comfortably	no	no	no	Yes, cultural events
Interview 9	comfortably	no	no	no	Yes, cultural events
Interview 10	comfortably	In the beginning	no	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 11	comfortably	no	Yes, food	no	Yes
Interview 12	normally	sometimes	Yes, people	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 13	comfortably	sometimes	Yes, family	no	Yes, cultural events
Interview 14	normally	Not often	Not often	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 15	Comfortably, safe	sometimes	no	Yes, sport, theatre	no
Interview 16	peacefully	sometimes	sometimes	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 17	comfortably	sometimes	rarely	yes	no
Interview 18	Peacefully, pleasantly	no	sometimes	no	Yes, cultural events
Interview 19	good	sometimes	Yes, family	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 20	comfortably	no	Not often	no	no
Interview 21	good	no	sometimes	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 22	comfortably	sometimes	Yes, people	no	Yes, cultural events
Interview 23	perfectly	no	no	yes	no
Interview 24	comfortably	no	Yes, people	yes	Yes, cultural events
Interview 25	comfortably	no	sometimes	no	no

**Table 7. Interviews. Section 4. Own religiosity**

Question	Are you a religious person?	Do you follow any religious traditions?	Do you possess any religious items?	Do you celebrate religious holidays?	Have you started to celebrate any new?
Interview 1	I used to be	yes	No	Easter, Christmas	Christmas
Interview 2	no	no	Yes, many	no	no
Interview 3	yes	yes	Yes	Yes, all	New calendar
Interview 4	partly	Yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	New calendar
Interview 5	yes	Yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	No
Interview 6	no	no	No	no	No
Interview 7	no	yes	No	no	No
Interview 8	yes	yes	Yes	yes	No
Interview 9	no	yes	Yes	Easter	Christmas
Interview 10	yes	yes	No	Easter, Christmas	New calendar
Interview 11	no	no	Yes	Christmas	New calendar
Interview 12	yes	yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	New calendar
Interview 13	yes	yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	New calendar
Interview 14	no	yes	Yes	Christmas	New calendar
Interview 15	no	no	No	Christmas	New calendar
Interview 16	yes	yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	New calendar
Interview 17	no	yes	No	Easter, Christmas	Juhannus
Interview 18	no	yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	both
Interview 19	yes	yes	No	Easter, Christmas	both
Interview 20	no	no	Yes	no	no
Interview 21	Not really	No	No	no	no
Interview 22	no	Yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	no
Interview 23	no	No	Yes	yes	yes
Interview 24	At some point	Yes	Yes	Easter, Christmas	both
Interview 25	At some point	no	yes	Easter	no

Question	Did religion play a significant role before the move?	Do you go to church now?	Do you feel any changes?	Have you ever accepted help from religious organisations?	Have any religious organisations tried to contact you?
Interview 1	yes	sometimes	no	no	Jehovah's Witnesses
Interview 2	no	no	no	no	no
Interview 3	yes	Yes, more often	Yes, church helped me	no	no
Interview 4	Not really	Not often	no	Yes	University events
Interview 5	yes	yes	I became more religious	Yes	JW
Interview 6	no	rarely	Became further from church	No	Baptists
Interview 7	no	As tourists	no	No	no
Interview 8	yes	no	no	No	Red Cross
Interview 9	Not really	rarely	no	Yes	JW
Interview 10	Not really	sometimes	no	No	JW
Interview 11	no	rarely	Quite the same	No	JW
Interview 12	no	rarely	no	Yes	JW
Interview 13	no	Yes	Yes, more often	Yes	JW
Interview 14	Not really	Rarely	no	Yes	JW, Mormons
Interview 15	no	Sometimes	no	No	JW
Interview 16	yes	Yes	no	No	JW
Interview 17	No	Rarely	no	No	JW
Interview 18	No	Sometimes	Yes, church is important	Yes	JW
Interview 19	No	Sometimes	no	No	JW
Interview 20	Yes	Yes	Lost some connections	No	no
Interview 21	No	Rarely	no	No	JW
Interview 22	No	Rarely	Yes, more tolerant	Yes	JW
Interview 23	No	Rarely	no	Yes	no
Interview 24	No	Rarely	Yes, more active	Yes	JW
Interview 25	no	sometimes	no	No	JW



**Table 8. Scoring evaluation (Family religious background and own religiosity).**

Question	Family religious background						
	Is your family religious	Are your parents baptised	Are your grandparents baptised	Religious items in the family	Religious holidays	Religious traditions	Does family go to church
Scoring	0-1-2	0-1-2	0-1-2	0-1	0-1	0-1-2	0-1-2
1	1	0	2	1	1	1	0
2	0	2	0	0	1	0	1
3	1	0	1	1	2	1	1
4	2	2	2	0	2	1	1
5	1	1	2	1	2	1	2
6	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
7	1	2	2	1	1	1	0
8	0	1	2	1	1	1	1
9	0	2	2	1	1	1	1
10	0	2	2	1	1	1	1
11	2	2	2	0	1	0	1
12	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
13	2	1	1	1	2	0	0
14	0	1	2	1	2	0	1
15	2	2	2	0	1	0	1
16	0	2	0	1	2	1	0
17	0	2	2	0	0	0	1
18	0	2	0	1	2	1	1
19	0	2	2	1	1	1	2
20	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
21	2	2	2	0	1	0	1
22	1	2	2	1	1	0	2
23	0	2	2	1	1	1	1
24	0	0	2	1	0	0	1
25	0	2	2	0	1	0	1
Group sc.	19	38	41	17	31	15	26

Own religiosity							
Are you baptised	Are your kids baptised	Do you have religious traditions	Do you possess religious items	Religious holidays	Do you go to church	Are you religious	
0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1-2	20
1	0	1	0	1	1	1	11
1	0	0	1	0	1	0	7
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	14
1	0	1	1	1	1	1	16
1	1	1	1	1	0	2	18
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
1	0	1	0	0	0	0	10
1	0	1	1	1	0	2	13
1	1	1	1	1	0	0	13
1	0	1	0	1	1	2	14
1	0	0	1	1	0	0	11
1	0	1	1	1	1	2	18
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	15
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	13
1	0	0	0	1	0	0	10
1	0	1	1	1	1	2	13
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	13
1	0	0	0	1	1	2	14
1	0	0	1	0	0	0	14
1	0	1	0	0	0	1	11
1	0	1	1	1	0	0	13
1	1	0	1	1	1	0	13
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	9
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	11
23	7	16	17	20	14	21	

**Table 9. Scoring evaluation (Emotional comfort in Finland).**

Question	Do you feel lonely?	Do you miss Russia?	Do you feel you are socialised?	What is your general feeling about your life in Finland?	Would you like your social life be more active?	
Scoring	No 1, Yes 0	No 1, Yes 0	No 0, at some level 1, absolutely yes 2	Positive adverb 1, negative 0	No 1, yes 0	Max 6 sc
1	0	1	2	0	1	4
2	1	0	1	1	1	4
3	0	1	2	0	1	4
4	1	0	1	1	1	4
5	0	1	1	0	1	3
6	0	1	2	0	1	4
7	0	0	2	0	1	3
8	0	0	0	0	1	1
9	0	0	0	1	1	2
10	1	0	0	0	1	2
11	0	1	1	0	1	3
12	1	1	1	0	1	4
13	1	1	2	1	1	6
14	1	0	2	1	1	5
15	1	0	2	1	1	5
16	1	1	2	1	1	6
17	1	1	3	0	1	5
18	1	1	2	0	1	5
19	1	1	1	1	1	5
20	0	0	2	0	1	3
21	0	1	0	0	1	2
22	1	1	2	0	1	5
23	1	0	2	1	1	5
24	0	1	2	0	1	4
25	0	1	0	1	1	3
Group sc.	13	15	32	10	25	