The Role of Religion, Identity and Discrimination in the Acculturation of Russian-speakers Living in Finland

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A thesis presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Slavonic and East European Studies
University College London
2021

Declaration

I, Liisa Tuhkanen confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis. I also declare I personally collected and analysed all fieldwork data on which this thesis is based.

Signed: Liisa Tuhkanen

Abstract

The acculturation of Russian-speakers, one of Europe's largest minorities, has been the focus of academic and public attention since the fall of the Soviet Union. In recent years, their situation has been complicated by the growing tensions in the EU-Russia relations. Existing research has suggested that the importance of religion may become highlighted in the lives of migrants and other cultural minorities, particularly in times of difficulties, yet religion's role in acculturation of minority groups in general and Russian-speakers in particular remains largely unexplored.

Against this backdrop, this thesis examines the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speaking minority through the prism of religion, identity, and discrimination. Using a mixed methods design where extensive qualitative fieldwork (participant observation, in-depth interviews) is complemented with a country-wide survey (224 respondents randomly sampled from all Finnish residents who have indicated Russian as their native language), it highlights the internal diversity of the Russian-speaking minority and the need for an intersectional approach to acculturation.

The thesis shows that religion - conceptualised as believing, belonging, practising and participating - plays a more significant role in the lives of Finland's Russian-speakers than is suggested by official statistics of low religious membership and highlights five domains through which religion relates to acculturation: practical support, identity construction and maintenance, social adaptation, psychological adaptation, and as a buffer against difficulties.

At the same time, the thesis argues that the role of faith and religion in the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speakers cannot be fully understood without examining their experiences of othering and discrimination as well as the variety and mixture of local, ethnic, national and supranational identifications salient among the members of this diverse and growing minority group.

Impact Statement

From the beginning, my research was guided by the goal of making an impact in the real world, both within and outside of academia.

Within academia, my research contributes to the theoretical and empirical discussions in the fields of cross-cultural psychology, anthropology, migration studies, and sociology of religion. In addition to the theoretical and empirical advances made by this thesis, it is my hope that adopting a mixed method approach and documenting both its strengths and its weaknesses in this thesis will encourage other PhD researchers to do the same.

Outside of academia, this thesis can make a difference in at least three ways. Firstly, as acculturation research often does, it may, together with other studies, have an effect on public policy. Secondly, it provides valuable information for religious communities and other non-governmental organisations to use when planning their acculturation programmes, and those focusing on Russian-speaking minorities in particular. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the research can raise awareness about one of Finland's and Europe's largest ethnocultural minorities and help dispel prejudice and misconceptions sometimes related to this minority group.

In practice, achieving this impact will require reaching out to both academic and non-academic audiences. I have already started doing so. For instance, a book chapter based on this research is set to be published in the fall of 2021, and I am currently working on three other academic articles based on the findings of this thesis. I have presented my work and the preliminary findings of the thesis at several conferences, including the ASN World conventions, ASN European Conference, BASEES, ETMU, NMR, and the special conference on Russian-speaking Communities in Europe. I also participated in the organisation of the 15th Biennial UCL SSEES International Postgraduate Conference as well as the SSEES research student seminar series. The research has already had impact in informing my teaching, both at the UCL SSEES course Researching Politics and Society and at the UCL Summer School on Global Citizenship.

During my PhD studies, I have written about my research and the topics of migration and minority rights more generally in several articles and blogs, some of them aimed at the general public. I have also engaged in conversations about my research on social media. This type of micro impact is difficult to quantify but, based on the messages I have received from members of the Russian-speaking minority, can nevertheless be of great importance. I plan to

continue disseminating my work both inside and outside of academia also after my doctorate, making use of my previous work experience as a journalist. In addition to the traditional forms of knowledge dissemination - articles, blog posts, commentary and conference presentations - I am particularly interested in engaging in new ways of dissemination and knowledge production that encourage participation of both the community members and the wider public.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my research participants, without whom this thesis would not have been possible. I am honoured by your choice to share your time and experiences with me, and I hope that this thesis does your stories justice.

I am very grateful to my supervisors, Professor Anne White and Dr. Titus Hjelm, for their support, guidance and friendship during these years. I would also like to thank Dr. Richard Mole for his useful feedback during my PhD upgrade and my examiners, Dr. Agnieszka Kubal and Dr. Ammon Cheskin, for the valuable comments and the inspiring discussion at my PhD defence - you made the viva experience a very enjoyable one!

This research project was funded by the Wihuri Foundation Grant and the UCL Studentship for Postgraduate Work - thank you for your generous support, which enabled me to pursue a PhD. I would also like to thank the Church Research Institute, the UCL Doctoral School, the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies, the SSEES Postgraduate Research Student fund, the University Association for Contemporary European Studies and the Cultura Foundation for supporting my fieldwork, training, and conference participation.

I am very grateful to the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki for welcoming me to conduct fieldwork in their premises. Special thanks to the parish employees and volunteers who kindly answered my questions and put me in touch with their parishioners - kiitos!

To Cumberland Lodge and the lovely people I have met there - thank you for the inspiring discussions and the incredible experiences. Being a Cumberland Lodge Fellow has been an honour and a privilege.

Thank you to UCL SSEES for being a lovely base from which to conduct research - both during this PhD and during my MRes studies. To my colleagues at UCL and other universities, my students, people who have commented on my presentations or connected me with potential participants, and everyone else who has shown interest in my research along the way: I am grateful for the support. A special thanks to Dr. Seth Graham and the SSEES PhD Writing group for bringing structure - and fun! - to the process of writing up the thesis during a global pandemic.

I've been lucky to work on my PhD at the same time as several friends. Whether it's cheering each other on at conferences, debating the Eurovision results, protesting for migrant rights, discussing the best practices of psychology or simply meeting up at a library to write together for a few hours, it's been a

pleasure sharing the PhD journey with you. To my other close friends, in Finland, Russia, London, Amsterdam and beyond: thank you for being interested in my research *and* for helping me take my mind off it when needed. A special thanks to Rita for the long discussions on the topics of my study (and for the best bachelorette party a girl could ask for!), and to Dr. Liudmila Dikaya, who has always shown her support, in research and in life.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family. My grandfathers, whose love and kindness I cherish to this day. My grandmother, who, while she has sometimes wondered how writing one book could take so many years, always expresses her love and support. My boyfriend, who in the process of the writing of this thesis has become my husband, for being on my side through thick and thin, introducing me to R, answering my many questions on philosophy of science and statistical equations, taking me on adventures around the world, and for everything else that you do for me. My brother Daniel for your unwavering enthusiasm, for always being ready to discuss my research and comment on my ideas, for connecting me with your networks, for reminding me why my work is important and, most of all, for all the love and joy that you bring to my life. Thank you, kiitos, спасибо - I love you all more than words could ever tell.

Finally, thank you to my mum, Aleksandra. From teaching me to read and write in two alphabets to encouraging me to conduct real research interviews for my 7th grade school project, you have always been my biggest champion. I remember calling you, bursting with excitement, when I had received my A-level results. It was a chilly day, but I had nevertheless bought a celebratory ice cream (we loved ice cream!) from a small market next to my high school. I remember as if it was yesterday how delighted you were for me, how sharing the happy news with you was even better than the results themselves. I know that I would feel the same way now. It breaks my heart that you were not here to see me get my Bachelor's, my Master's, or now my PhD, but it is thanks to you that I first became interested in research, and it is thanks to you that I was able to finish this thesis. So thank you, mum, for everything. I love you, and I miss you every day.

Abbreviations

EU The European Union

FOC The Orthodox Church of Finland

JW Jehovah's Witnesses

OSF Official Statistics of Finland

RF Russian Federation

ROC The Orthodox Church of Russia

UK The United Kingdom

US The United States

A note on language and translation

The majority of the data I collected and analysed in the course of this research is in languages other than English, mostly Russian and Finnish. My goal in translating this material into English for the purposes of this thesis was to convey, as far as possible, the meaning and tone of the original material. In cases where I felt that an English translation could not fully capture the nuances of a certain word or sentence, I have included them in their original form after the translation: for single words or short phrases, I have provided the originals in parenthesis within the quotations, while for longer sentences or cases requiring further explanation, I have used footnotes. In some instances, interviewees used more than one language in the course of an interview, sometimes changing languages mid-sentence. When quoting from such material, I have indicated the change of language where I deem it to be significant.

Contents

1 Introduction **17**
- 1.1 Introduction . . . 17
- 1.2 Aims and relevance of the study . . . 17
- 1.3 Russians and Russian-speakers, migrants and minorities . . . 19
- 1.4 Research questions . . . 21
- 1.5 Thesis overview and structure . . . 22

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework **25**
- 2.1 Introduction . . . 25
- 2.2 Acculturation . . . 26
  - 2.2.1 What is culture? . . . 26
  - 2.2.2 Concepts of cultural change . . . 28
  - 2.2.3 Acculturation strategies . . . 29
  - 2.2.4 Challenges and suggestions for improvement of the bi-dimensional model . . . 32
  - 2.2.5 Adaptation . . . 36
- 2.3 Collective Identities . . . 37
  - 2.3.1 Constructed images of self . . . 37
  - 2.3.2 Is identity still useful? . . . 39
  - 2.3.3 Intertwined self-understandings . . . 41
  - 2.3.4 Multiple, hybrid and supranational identities . . . 43
  - 2.3.5 The relationship between identity and acculturation . . . 46
- 2.4 Religion . . . 47
  - 2.4.1 Defining religion . . . 47
  - 2.4.2 The relationship between religion and acculturation . . . 49
- 2.5 Theoretical framework for this thesis . . . 53
- 2.6 Conclusions . . . 56

3 Pragmatic Approach to Studying Acculturation: Research Design and Methodology **57**
- 3.1 Introduction . . . 57
- 3.2 Research design . . . 58
  - 3.2.1 Pragmatism and constructivism . . . 58
  - 3.2.2 Methodological pluralism and mixed methods . . . 60

3.3 Practical considerations . . . 63
3.3.1 Research process . . . 63
3.3.2 Languages of fieldwork . . . 64
3.4 Ethical considerations . . . 64
3.5 Data collection . . . 66
3.5.1 Interviews . . . 66
3.5.2 Survey . . . 68
3.5.3 Ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation . . . 76
3.6 Data Analysis . . . 78
3.6.1 Thematic analysis . . . 78
3.6.2 Statistical analysis . . . 80
3.7 People like you and me: the role and position of the researcher . 81
3.8 Conclusions . . . 84

4 Empirical background: Russian-speakers in Finland 86
4.1 Introduction . . . 86
4.2 The Russian-speaking diaspora . . . 87
4.3 Russian-speakers in Finland: a growing and diverse minority . . 90
4.3.1 The old Russians . . . 94
4.3.2 Ingrian Finnish remigrants . . . 95
4.3.3 First-generation migrants . . . 97
4.3.4 Finland-raised Russian-speakers . . . 98
4.4 The general acculturation landscape and integration policies in Finland . . . 98
4.5 Attitudes towards Russian-speakers in Finland . . . 101
4.6 The religious landscape of Finland . . . 104
4.6.1 Example of a fieldwork site: The Orthodox Parish of Helsinki . . . 106
4.7 Previous research among Russian-speakers in Finland . . . 107
4.7.1 Acculturation and adaptation . . . 108
4.7.2 Identity . . . 109
4.7.3 Religion . . . 110
4.8 Conclusions . . . 111

5 Acculturation and Adaptation 113
5.1 Introduction . . . 113
5.2 Factors moderating acculturation . . . 115
5.2.1 Migration motivations . . . 115
5.2.2 Voluntariness of the move . . . 116
5.2.3 Personal factors, positionality, and class . . . 117
5.2.4 Growing up in Finland as a Russian-speaker . . . 119
5.3 Acculturation strategies and adaptation . . . 122
5.4 Adaptation landscapes . . . 127
5.5 Domains of adaptation . . . 130
5.5.1 Language . . . 130
5.5.2 Cultural adaptation . . . 133

5.5.3 Social adaptation . . . 135
5.5.4 Psychological adaptation . . . 137
5.6 Challenges of adaptation . . . 139
5.7 Conclusions . . . 141

6 Identity and Belonging 142
6.1 Introduction . . . 142
6.2 How do Finland's Russian-speakers identify? . . . 143
6.2.1 Russians, but not only - the diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community . . . 143
6.2.2 Cosmopolitans and citizens of the world - multiple, hybrid, and supranational identities . . . 144
6.2.3 Who am I? Essentialist and non-essentialist identifications 146
6.2.4 'I'm not a nationalist' - challenging the centrality of ethnic and national identities . . . 149
6.3 Discourses of belonging and disbelonging: Russian language and Russian-speaking communities . . . 150
6.3.1 'He's one of ours, he speaks Russian' - Russian language as an identity marker . . . 150
6.3.2 Who counts as us? A community of Russian-speakers . . . 152
6.3.3 Artists from St. Petersburg and tractor drivers from Siberia: constructing difference within the Russian-speaking minority . . . 154
6.3.4 'Where "back at ours"? I'm from Latvia' - Russianness as a resource and a liability . . . 158
6.4 'Well, you have completely Finnicised here': Identity and acculturation . . . 160
6.5 Conclusions . . . 163

7 'I Used to Think that I Was Finnish': Experiences of Othering and Discrimination 165
7.1 Introduction . . . 165
7.2 'I don't know if that's the right word' - what counts as discrimination? . . . 167
7.3 'You get this feeling that you're dirty' - experiences of discrimination . . . 169
7.4 'A certain type of a Russian girl' - the intersections of gender and ethnicity . . . 170
7.5 'In Russia a Finn, here a Russian': identity, discrimination, and othering . . . 172
7.6 Narratives of resistance and responsibility . . . 174
7.6.1 You feel like it's your own community: narratives of resistance . . . 174
7.6.2 'Perhaps it's not always good to shout loudly in Russian': narratives of responsibility . . . 176
7.6.3 Exploring the differences with the help of statistical tests 179

7.7 Conclusions 181

8 Believing, Belonging, Practising and Participating: Religion in the Lives of Finland's Russian-Speakers 183
8.1 Introduction 183
8.2 Importance of religion in everyday life 184
8.3 Dimensions of religion 186
8.3.1 Believing 186
8.3.2 Belonging 189
8.3.3 Practising 192
8.3.4 Participating 195
8.4 A believer, not religious: personal versus organised religion . . . 199
8.5 Religious diversity and syncretism 201
8.6 Religion, faith, and the experience of migration 203
8.6.1 Finding faith in Finland 204
8.6.2 'I didn't know anything' - confusion surrounding religion . 207
8.6.3 Religion in Finland vs Religion in other countries 208
8.6.4 The choice of parish 210
8.7 Conclusions 212

9 'You Had to Go Through it With Faith': the Relationship Between Acculturation and Religion 213
9.1 Introduction 213
9.2 Practical support provided by religious communities 215
9.3 Religion and identity 218
9.3.1 Churches as places for emphasising Finnishness 220
9.3.2 Churches as places for supporting heritage identities . . . 222
9.3.3 Religion and cosmopolitanism 225
9.3.4 Cosmopolitanism as part of the Orthodox Easter celebrations 227
9.4 Religion and social adaptation 230
9.4.1 Creating ties within and across communities 232
9.4.2 Church as an arena of social adaptation 233
9.4.3 Proposed structural model for the relationship between religion and social adaptation 237
9.5 Faith and psychological adaptation 238
9.5.1 Proposed structural models for the relationship between religion and psychological adaptation 241
9.6 Religion and faith as buffers against difficulties 242
9.6.1 The process of migration 243
9.6.2 A buffer against discrimination 243
9.6.3 Personal challenges 244
9.7 Beyond instrumentalism: Faith as a value in and of itself 247
9.8 Conclusions 248

10 Conclusions **250**
10.1 Introduction 250
10.2 Contributions of the thesis 251
10.2.1 Theories of acculturation 251
10.2.2 The relationship between religion and acculturation . . . 252
10.2.3 The lived experience of being a Russian-speaker in Finland 254
10.2.4 Methodological pluralism 255
10.3 Areas for further research 255
10.4 Final thoughts 257

A Appendix 1: List of Interviewees **258**

B Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire in English **260**

List of Figures and Illustrations

2.1 The fourfold model of acculturation strategies. Reproduced from Berry (2003, p. 23). 30
2.2 Acculturation framework for this thesis 54
2.3 Theoretical model for the relationship between acculturation, identity, and religion 55

3.1 Methodological framework for this thesis 61
3.2 Survey respondents by age. Respondents' age varied between 18 and 85 years, with the mean of 47 years. 69
3.3 Survey respondents by country of birth 69
3.4 Survey respondents by gender 70
3.5 Survey respondents by age at immigration. For respondents born outside of Finland, this ranged from one to 73 years, with a mean of 34 years. 71
3.6 Respondents born outside of Finland by country from which they moved to Finland 71
3.7 A fieldwork photo from March 2018. 78

4.1 The number of Russian-speakers in Finland between 1990-2019. Reproduced from OSF (2021). 91
4.2 The Statue of Emperor Alexander II on the Senate Square in central Helsinki, April 2018. Both the square and the Helsinki Cathedral, visible in the background, were built when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Empire. Alexander II is often credited with strengthening the Finnish autonomy. 93
4.3 A fieldwork photo from central Helsinki, April 2018. The Uspenski Cathedral can be seen in the background. 106

5.1 The pairwise relationship between marginalisation and life satisfaction scores. 126
5.2 Mean scores for different domains of cultural adaption. Higher scores indicate greater difficulties in that area of adaptation. . . . 135

5.3 Life satisfaction scores among survey respondents. 138

6.1 Examples of multiple, hybrid and supranational identities disclosed by interviewees and survey participants 145
6.2 Examples of the ethnic background of selected survey respondents and their parents, as reported by the respondent 147

7.1 The relationship between being raised in Finland and perceived discrimination. 179
7.2 The relationship between perceived discrimination and marginalisation scores. 181

8.1 Belief in God among survey respondents 187
8.2 Membership in religious organisations 190
8.3 Religious identity among survey respondents. N.B.: Each respondent could choose multiple options. 191

9.1 A page from the digital edition of Ortodoksiviesti, the journal of the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki (issue 01/2017). The page features the same column on the benefits of multiculturalism in Finnish (above) and Russian (below). 226
9.2 A selection of flags on display at an Orthodox church in the metropolitan region of Helsinki 227
9.3 A photograph of the first page of a list of Paschal Greetings, handed out to churchgoers at the Easter service 229
9.4 Structural model for the relationship between social adaptation and religious participation 237

List of Tables

2.1 Bridging and bonding ties imposed over the fourfold model of acculturation strategies 51

3.1 The steps of thematic analysis, adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) 79

5.1 Acculturation strategies among survey respondents. 124
5.2 Coefficients and model statistics for the multiple regression model predicting life satisfaction. 125
5.3 Examples of Jelena's domains of acculturation 128

8.1 Observance of traditional folk beliefs 202

9.1 Types of support provided by religious organisations 218
9.2 Coefficients and model statistics for the multiple regression model predicting social adaptation. 238

10.1 Religion's role in the process of acculturation 254

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

> *The only Finnish friends we had in the beginning were Swedish-speakers and Jehovah's Witnesses.*

I'd heard our family joke many times in my childhood, often repeated at dinner parties and December celebrations. It always seemed to go down well: most of the people we hosted instinctively understood that making friends was easier with members of other minorities, and with people whose religious beliefs would not allow them to be put off by your accent. There's an ounce of joke in every joke,[1] as my mum often said, paraphrasing the famous proverb.

I was reminded of this in 2013 when, during my previous fieldwork in Finland, I noticed that religion and faith emerged as important resources in the accounts of many minority members I met. Faith gave life a meaning and provided support in times of challenges. Churches were places of meeting people, of escaping loneliness. Religion could provide minority members with an anchor in the process of acculturation and a sense of self not tied to ethnic or national borders. I also noticed that this phenomenon - which I recognised from my childhood and was seeing around me once again - had not been fully documented in academic research or in public discussions, particularly those focusing on Russian-speaking minorities.

1.2 Aims and relevance of the study

The goal of this thesis is to explore the interplay between acculturation, social identities, and religion. It aims to add to academic and public discussions on minority acculturation, the Russian-speaking communities, and the role of religion in the lives of ethnocultural minorities. More specifically, my aim is to uncover how religion relates to ethnic and national identities, how ethnic and

[1] В каждой шутке есть доля шутки.

national identities relate to religion, and how these together affect acculturation with reference to a particular acculturating group, that of Europe's Russian-speaking minority. In particular, I will be looking at Russian-speakers living in Finland, where their number has rapidly grown since the fall of the Soviet Union, reaching 84 190 in 2020 (OSF 2021). Today, Russian is the third most widely spoken native language in the small Nordic country.

As the largest 'migrant' group in Finland and one of the largest diasporas in the world,[2] Russian-speakers have often attracted the interest of researchers. However, their processes of acculturation and adaptation merit more attention (Varjonen et al. 2017), particularly in the light of the recently intensified securitisation discourse that presents Russian-speaking minorities as a potential security threat for Europe (Sotkasiira 2018).

One question that remains largely unexplored is the role that religion plays in the lives and the acculturation processes of Russian-speaking minorities. The question also has broader theoretical significance: in fact, religion has been identified as one of the important unexplored questions and emerging trends in the study of acculturation (Sabatier et al. 2016). So far, the topic has received surprisingly little attention, with most existing studies focusing on North America and/or certain religious denominations. Orthodox communities, in particular, have so far been neglected by researchers (Hämmerli and Mayer 2016; Martikainen 2013). This is one of the areas where the present study seeks to make a contribution to both academic and non-academic discussions.

In the Finnish context, one reason that may explain why researchers have so far largely overlooked religion's connection to the acculturation of Russian-speakers is their low rate of religious membership: official statistics suggest that they are much less likely to be registered members of faith-based organisations than an average person living in Finland. In 2015, when nearly 73 percent of Finland's residents were members of the Lutheran and 1.1 percent of the Orthodox church, 77 percent of Russian-speakers did not officially belong to any religious organisation (OSF 2016; Tilastokeskus 2016).[3]

This situation is likely to be, at least in part, a consequence of religion's societal position in the Soviet Union. At the same time, after decades of state-enforced atheism, many ex-Soviet countries are now experiencing a religious revival (Simons and Westerlund 2016b; see chapter 4). It has been suggested that the low membership numbers do not necessarily correlate with low levels of beliefs or of participation in religious activities (Voas 2007, p. 147) but, to the best of my knowledge, no data supporting or refuting these hypotheses has until now been available in the context of Finland's Russian-speaking minority. Thus, another aim of my research is to fill this gap, producing knowledge on

[2] According to the United Nations (2016), Russia had the world's third largest diaspora in 2015, after India and Mexico. It should be noted that the number cited by the UN, 11 million, does not include Russian-speaking migrants from countries other than Russia.

[3] As will be discussed in chapter 4, that same year 9 percent of Russian-speakers belonged to the Lutheran and 13 percent to the Finnish Orthodox church (Tilastokeskus 2016). More recent official figures on the religious membership of Russian-speakers living in Finland were not available at the time of the writing of this chapter in 2021.

the religious beliefs, practices, and participation of Finland's Russian-speaking community.

It is impossible to discuss the relationship between acculturation and religion without considering the question of identity. As I will discuss in chapter 4, Orthodoxy is often understood as a crucial part of Russian identity, while the Lutheran church has played a similar role in the creation of Finnish national consciousness. In relation to this, one of my goals was to uncover whether the ethnic, national and supranational identities of Finland's Russian-speakers relate to their religion and whether this, in turn, affects their acculturation. The topic is important: Jakelic (2004, p. 15) has even argued that 'the conceptualization and analysis of religion in a manner that establishes a link between religion-collective identity-social change/social order [—] has implications for assessing the place of religion in modern societies in general.'

Finally, this study seeks to make a methodological contribution. The use of qualitative methods is only just emerging in the study of (psychological) acculturation, which has traditionally relied heavily on quantitative surveys, and merits more attention (Sam and Berry 2016). I answer this methodological challenge by using an interdisciplinary, mixed methods approach that combines in-depth interviews and a quantitative survey of Finland's Russian-speakers, as well as participant observation conducted in religious and non-religious spaces frequented by members of this diverse minority group.

1.3 Russians and Russian-speakers, migrants and minorities

Before proceeding any further, I would like to make note of two terminological choices central to my work.

Firstly, and in accordance with most other academic writings on the topic, I have made a conscious decision to use the term 'Russian-speakers' instead of 'Russians' throughout this thesis.[4] This choice is motivated by the understanding that people who would describe themselves as 'ethnic Russians' form only one part of the culturally heterogeneous Russian-speaking community in Finland. Focusing on the language instead of ethnic background allowed me to account for the experiences of those Russophones who do not necessarily identify as Russians or with Russia, including those who choose to reject ethnic and/or national labels altogether.

At the same time, I recognise that Russian-speaker itself is not an uncomplicated term. As noted by Cheskin and Kachuyevski (2019, p. 4), Russian-speakers and their identities 'appear to be subject to competing bordering and diasporising practices, whereby various actors vie to define who Russian speakers are, where they rightfully belong, and what characteristics define them'. In the writing of this thesis, I perforce participate in these practices, whether I like them or not.

[4] Unless referring to Russian citizens and/or those self-identifying as Russians.

Secondly, I have elected to speak of 'Russian-speakers' and 'Russian-speaking minorities' instead of 'Russian-speaking migrant(s)' when not exclusively referring to people who have experienced migration and/or identify as immigrants. Here, too, the decision is based on several factors. First of all, it is important to note that there have been Russians and other native Russian-speakers living in Finland for centuries (Protassova and Tuhkanen 2003). Nation-states are not the natural, unchanging cultural wholes that they sometimes pretend to be; while recent migration flows have undoubtedly added to their diversity, 'most of today's nationalities [–] are conglomerates of historically separable elements' (Laitin 1998, p. 31), even if this inherent hybridity is not always officially recognized, and this is also true of Finland.

In the context of these homogenising nation-states, Russian-speakers, and Russians in particular, are often presented as newcomers, migrants or settlers despite the fact that, as pointed out by Poppe and Hagendoorn (2001, p. 57), Russian minorities can be considered indigenous in many of the regions where they reside. Speaking of a minority instead of migrants helps highlight this oft-ignored fact.

My choice is also informed by the increasing recognition among acculturation scholars that the term migrant may be problematic, particularly when used in relation to the so-called second-generation: are children and grandchildren of immigrants doomed to perpetual otherness? Just as importantly, many Russian-speakers who have moved to Finland in their adulthood do not necessarily identify as migrants either. The Ingrian Finnish returnees, for instance, often think of their move to Finland in terms of coming home instead of moving abroad (Tuhkanen 2013). Yet this does not mean that they do not experience acculturation: phenomena such as discrimination, othering, segmented assimilation and rise of everyday transnationalism mean that acculturation is often just as important for co-ethnic returnees and children of immigrants as it is for first-generation adult migrants, even if the process may look different from the outside (see Bloch and Hirsch 2018; Levitt 2009; Portes et al. 2009; Remennick 2003; Waters et al. 2010).

Overall, 'migrant' and 'immigrant' are ambiguous terms that are often pushed on rather than chosen by individuals. Even when used in a neutral or positive way, classifying people as migrants can imply difference. In this thesis, my focus is on all Russian-speakers; those who have moved to the country recently and/or identify as immigrants, but also those whose ancestors have lived in Finland for centuries and/or who do not find the label fitting.

Of course, the diversity of this community extends beyond ethnic and national identifications or experiences of migration. Like Russian-speakers in Toronto, described by Rogova (2020, p. 17), the Russian-speakers in Finland can also 'be found in any walk of life, living in any part of the city, renting a cheap apartment, owning a spacious house with a beautiful backyard, taking public transit or driving an expensive car'. It is important to highlight this diversity, because it is often missing from discussions and public depictions of Russian-speakers.

Against this background, one could question the decision to study the ac-

culturation of Russian-speakers as one group. While mindful of the possibility that this approach may contribute to the very generalisations that I have argued against, I believe it to be justified for several reasons. Firstly, as I will show in this thesis, the Russian language is of great importance to many Russian-speakers, and the shared language often brings people together across ethnic, national and/or religious borders. Similarly, regardless of their background, a majority of the research participants seemed to share an idea of and cherish what they described as Russian or Russian-speaking (or, at times, simply 'our') culture (see chapter 6). Finally, Russian-speakers of different backgrounds are regularly viewed and referred to as one group (often, as simply Russians) by others, both in Finland and in other countries (see chapter 7).

But who counts as a Russian-speaker in the context of this study? It is perhaps not surprising that, as a researcher working with identities, I feel that the answer to this question should be based on the self-identification of the potential participants instead of any top-down definitions of native language or linguistic fluency. Nevertheless, due to sampling practicalities, the sample for the survey research was randomly drawn from an official database of Finnish residents whose native language is marked as Russian. At the same time, trying to avoid unnecessary categorisations, I did not set any linguistic or other requirements as to who could be considered a Russian-speaker in the qualitative part of this research. Instead, the evaluation was left to the potential participants themselves.

1.4 Research questions

The main goal of this thesis is to gain new information on the processes of minority acculturation, and those of Finland's Russian-speaking minority in particular. Having identified a gap in the field, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What role does religion play in the process of acculturation of Russian-speakers living in Finland?
2. What other factors affect the acculturation of Russian-speakers? What are the most pressing challenges in their processes of acculturation?
3. What role do ethnocultural identities play in the process of acculturation? How do they relate to religion and religious identities?
4. What role does religion play in the everyday lives of Russian-speakers?

In addition to these research questions, the quantitative study was guided by a series of hypotheses, based on previous studies and my own qualitative findings, among them: that integration as an acculturation strategy would be linked with more successful adaptation outcomes; that faith, religious practice and religious participation would facilitate social and psychological adaptation; that membership in Lutheran churches and participation in Lutheran services would

correlate positively with Finnish and Ingrian Finnish identities, while membership in Orthodox church and participating in Orthodox services would show a similar connection with Russian and Finnish identities; and that membership and participation in the Orthodox and Lutheran churches would correlate positively with supranational and multiple identities. These and other hypotheses will be presented and discussed in more detail from chapter 5 onward.

1.5 Thesis overview and structure

This thesis is structured into ten chapters. It consists of two parts: Chapters 1-4 introduce the theoretical and methodological framework of the thesis and situate it into a certain social and historical context. Chapters 5-10 are based on original empirical data collected for this thesis. They discuss the findings of the study and situate them into the wider academic and public discussions.

In the current chapter, chapter 1, I have introduced the topic of this thesis, discussed its relevance, and outlined the main research questions and hypotheses. Importantly, the chapter has identified a need for further research into acculturation of Europe's Russian-speaking minorities and the relationship between acculturation and religion, as well as for mixed methods approach to acculturation research.

Chapter 2 sets out the theoretical framework of this thesis and examines its central concepts: acculturation, adaptation, identity and religion, as well as the relationships between them. Perhaps the most striking similarity between the concepts lies in their ambiguity: as a consequence of having been extensively used across and beyond social sciences for many decades, all four have been and still are conceptualised in various different, sometimes conflicting ways.

Due partly to this interdisciplinary nature of my topic, I employed a pragmatist approach to studying acculturation. Chapter 3 introduces this pragmatist paradigm and the overall methodological framework of the study. It explains the practicalities of study design, data collection and data analysis. Special attention will be paid to the advantages and challenges of using mixed methods, one of the defining choices of this research and one which sets it apart from most acculturation studies, which have traditionally relied on quantitative surveys. The chapter also provides a detailed discussion of the positionality of the researcher and my own position in the field vis-à-vis the research participants, highlighting the importance of reflexivity.

Chapter 4 turns the focus onto Finland's Russian-speaking minority and provides empirical background information central to understanding the analysis presented in chapters 5-10. It shows that Russian-speakers in Finland differ from Russian-speaking communities in many other countries due to their internal diversity as well as Finland's history: while Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Empire from 1809 until gaining independence in 1917, it was never part of the Soviet Union.[5] The national identity of the small Nordic country has often been constructed in contrast to its neighbours, and to Russia

[5]Before 1809, Finland had been a province of the Kingdom of Sweden for several centuries.

in particular, which is still reflected in the attitudes towards Russian-speakers today.

The chapter will further highlight that the diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking minority goes beyond ethnic or cultural markers. The research participants included both first-generation migrants and Finland-born respondents. Some had moved to Finland for work, while others struggled to find employment that would correspond with their education. Some interviewees felt at home in Finland, others felt less settled. Despite these and other important differences in both individual and group-level experiences, I prescribe to the universalist view of acculturation, according to which 'the psychological processes that operate during acculturation are essentially the same for all groups' (Berry and Sam 1997, p. 296), notwithstanding the differences in circumstances and cultures. This allows me to look at the Russian-speaking community as a whole, while still recognising the important differences that may and do affect the acculturation of its individual members.

These differences will be addressed in Chapter 5, which begins the empirical part of this thesis with an in-depth exploration of the acculturation process. It focuses on the way in which acculturation attitudes, personal circumstances, differences in acculturation landscapes and other moderating factors affect both the process of acculturation and the adaptation of Finland's Russian-speaking minority and suggests that acculturation research should centre social and psychological adaptation.

In order to answer the research questions on the relationship between acculturation and religion, I need to first discuss some of the central factors affecting them both. One such factor is identity. Polletta and Jasper (2001, p. 300) have called on researchers to 'move beyond simply asserting the constructedness of identities by showing the variety of forms that identities take and the very different behaviours they require.' I will attempt to do just this in chapter 6, which will focus on the different ways in which Finland's Russian-speakers identify and disidentify. In addition to discussing the many different ethnic, national and supranational identities of Finland's Russian-speakers, the chapter will show that they often engage in internal boundary drawing vis-à-vis other members of this minority.

With relation to this, chapter 7 examines the role that attitudes of the receiving society play in the processes of acculturation and identity formation of Finland's Russian-speaking minority. It suggests that these attitudes, and experiences of discrimination and othering in particular, cannot be ignored when discussing the adaptation of Russian-speakers and the relationship between acculturation and religion. The chapter also examines the discourses employed by Russian-speakers when talking about discrimination, highlighting *narratives of responsibility* and *narratives of resistance*.

Moving onto the topic of religion, chapter 8 sheds light on the religiosity of Finland's Russian-speaking minority, combining qualitative and quantitative data for an overview of the roles that religion, religiosity and faith play in the lives of the research participants. It identifies four domains of religion that are particularly significant for Finland's Russian-speakers and, through a close

examination of these domains, shows that religion's significance goes far beyond that suggested by the low official numbers of religious membership.

Drawing on the findings of the previous chapters, chapter 9 will chart and discuss the various ways in which religion, faith, and religious organisations can and do affect the processes of acculturation for Russian-speakers living in Finland. Finally, chapter 10 will conclude the thesis by reflecting on the significance of the findings and offering recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the theoretical framework of my research through a detailed discussion of its central concepts: acculturation, identity, and religion. Common to these terms is their popularity on the one hand and ambiguity on the other: all three are frequently used in social research, defined in various, sometimes conflicting ways.

Due partly to this ubiquity and the ensuing ambiguity, acculturation, identity, and religion have all received their fair share of criticism, with some scholars going as far as questioning their usefulness. Thus, one of my goals in this chapter is to explain why I have chosen to use these concepts and define the ways in which I understand them.

While I will chart the historical development and contemporary discussions surrounding the concepts where relevant, the main focus of this chapter will be on literature that is closely related to my research questions. With acculturation, I strive to show how the old, assimilationist idea(l)s have been replaced by an understanding of the complexity of this multifaceted process, to better fit the lived reality of acculturating individuals. When it comes to identity, I am particularly interested in how the internal diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community may challenge the traditional ideas of singular or, in more recent years, dual identifications and become reflected in the concepts of hybrid, multiple and supranational identities. With relation to religion, I will highlight that, analytically, the concept is best approached as a series of subconcepts that capture its different domains.

The chapter will conclude with a presentation of the theoretical framework of this study and a proposed model for the relationship between its central concepts.

2.2 Acculturation

2.2.1 What is culture?

Acculturation is the theoretical construct used to describe and explain the complex, dynamic and multidimensional process that groups and individuals undergo when encountering a new cultural environment. As a group phenomenon, the concept refers to the changes that occur within two or more cultural groups as a consequence of coming into contact with each other (Graves 1967). On the psychological level, it focuses on the individuals from the acculturating groups and is based on the assumption that cultural influences affect their attitudes, values, identities and behaviours (Berry 1997). The division between these two layers of acculturation is important, not least because people in and from similar contexts can and frequently do acculturate in very different ways (Berry 2003, p. 19). As such, acculturation is not born solely from the interaction between two or more cultures, but also affected by various moderating factors.

As the rapid rise of interest in acculturation in recent decades is frequently attributed to 'increasing migration pressures' (Rudmin 2009a, p. 2), it is not surprising that the concept is most often studied and discussed with reference to immigrants and members of other ethnocultural minorities. In fact, most acculturative changes occur among non-dominant groups – migrants, refugees, cultural diasporas and others – experiencing what could be described as 'major' acculturation (Berry et al. 2011, p. 310) However, dominant groups and their members also undergo changes as a result of contact with other cultures, and this process merits more attention (Berry 2021; Kunst et al. 2021; Oudenhoven and Ward 2013).

The significance of this process, particularly for those experiencing major acculturation, should not be underestimated. Previous studies have linked acculturation with a wide array of physical, social and psychological phenomena, including mental and physical health, personal relationships, family function, political participation, self-esteem, and the general well-being of the acculturating individual (Organista et al. 2003; Santisteban and Mitrani 2003; Smokowski et al. 2009). While acculturation is an ongoing process that does not have one achievable end (Trimble 2003), in the long term, it may eventually lead to adaptation. This can mean behavioural, psychological or sociocultural shifts, including changes to individual's self-identification (Berry 2003, p. 21).

Here, acculturation has to be distinguished from two processes that relate to the learning and gaining competence in 'one's own culture' during childhood: *en*culturation, which refers to the 'general "enfolding" of individuals in the context of their culture', and socialisation, which involves more deliberate tutelage and training (Berry et al. 2011, p. 41). Both enculturation and socialisation produce similarity *within* groups and differences *between* them. While acculturation is different in that it usually (but, as will be discussed later, not always) involves learning from a culture that is not one's 'own' and often later in life, all three processes are forms of cultural transmission. In fact, acculturation can be understood as secondary enculturation (Berry et al. 2011).

As shown above, it is nearly impossible to study acculturation without touching on the question of culture (Chirkov 2009a). One of the earlier definitions of this concept was provided by anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, who in his seminal work *Primitive Culture* (1871, p. 1) famously wrote that '[c]ulture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.'[1]

Tylor's definition has been criticised for social evolutionism and for its 'extreme inclusivity' (Avruch 1998, p. 7). Yet conceptualizing culture in less ambiguous ways has not proved easy; reviewing the use of the term some 75 years after the publication of *Primitive Culture*, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) found over 150 different definitions for culture. Since then, the conversation on the nature, form and boundaries of culture has become heated 'to the point where the very legitimacy of the concept has been questioned' (Berry et al. 2011, p. 227).

While participation in this debate falls outside of the scope of this study, it is important to note that the complexity and ambiguity of 'culture' cannot help but reflect on the study of acculturation - up to the fundamental question of what we study when we study acculturation. For the purpose of this thesis, I will adopt the working definition of culture presented by Berry et al. (2011) in the context of cross-cultural psychology: I understand culture as 'the shared way of life of a group of people' (p. 4) that includes 'a set of external conditions within which humans develop and act as well as [–] constructed psychological meanings' (p. 10). Consequently, culture is both a shared social reality and an internal, psychological reality personal to each individual (Barker 2015). At the same time, I also draw on Barth (1969) who sees boundary drawing to be one of the primary functions of the concept of culture. This drawing of boundaries, I suggest, is one of the factors that can make acculturation challenging, particularly when it involves cultures or groups traditionally presented in opposition with each other, as is often the case for Russian-speakers in Finland (see chapters 4 and 7).

The second of the above-mentioned criticisms aimed at Tylor's work, that of social evolutionism, is more substantial and importantly relates to the act of boundary drawing. Tylor (2016, p. 26-27) suggested that civilisation existed 'among mankind in different measures' and that societies could be divided into different stages - savagery, barbarism, and modern educated life - based on their development. While such crude categorisations would hardly be suggested or allowed today, it should be noted that less explicit ideas of cultural hierarchies have not fully disappeared; in fact, accusations of barbarism against certain nations or cultures are still sometimes voiced, in public discussions if not in the field of academia. In the context of the current study, it is important to note that historical Western ideas of civilised and less civilised nations have since the 16th century often placed Russia in the latter category, presenting Russians

[1] For the purposes of this thesis, it is notable that Tylor explicitly mentions belief. Indeed, many definitions of culture - both old and newer ones - list belief or religion as one of its constitutive parts (Matsumoto et al. 1996; Spencer-Oatey 2008).

as barbaric, backward, dirty, uncivilised, ignorant, slave-minded and even un-Christian (Karemaa 1998; Neumann 1999; Paddock 2010; Stevens 2016).

In the context of acculturation, the persisting tendency to hierarchiarise cultures has often been reflected in the assimilationist stance which suggests that it is the task or even the duty of the acculturating individuals - particularly those of certain backgrounds - to shed their heritage culture in favour of that of the majority population. In recent years, however, acculturation researchers have increasingly challenged both this unilinear model of acculturation and the idea of one, clearly defined 'majority culture' with relation to which minorities are expected to acculturate. Instead, acculturation is increasingly understood as a complex, bi- or multilinear, and multidimensional process. I will chart these developments in the next section.

2.2.2 Concepts of cultural change

If it is no easy task to define culture, the same can be said of acculturation itself. Originally coined in anthropology, the concept has also been widely used in various other disciplines, including sociology, political science and cross-cultural psychology. Despite — or perhaps due to — its importance across social, political and behavioural sciences, the term has not always been unambiguously defined. In fact, such diverse concepts as integration, assimilation, adaptation and multiculturalism, to mention but a few, are sometimes used interchangeably with acculturation in academic publications as well as public discussions, leading to conceptual ambiguity and hampering much-needed interdisciplinary research into the topic.

While cultural change resulting from intercultural contact has interested scholars (at least) since the days of Plato (Rudmin 2003), the start of systematic research on acculturation can be traced back to the late 19th century. The concept is believed to have been first used by scientist J.W. Powell, who in 1883 described it as a set of 'psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation' (Rudmin 2009a, p. 5).

In their seminal 'Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation' for *American Anthropologist*, Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936, p. 149) defined acculturation as 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups'. They further outlined three possible outcomes of the acculturation process: *acceptance*, comprising the loss of most of the heritage culture; *adaptation*, denoting either harmonious or conflicting combination of original and new cultures; and *reaction*, characterised by the rise of what are described as contra-acculturative movements. Notably, the memorandum explicitly distinguished between acculturation and assimilation, calling the latter, much in accordance with the contemporary understanding of the word, 'a phase of acculturation' (ibid.).

Despite this early division between the two concepts, much of the past research has, and some authors still continue to, use acculturation as a synonym for assimilation (Oudenhoven and Ward 2013, p. 82; Ryder et al. 2000; Skuza

2007). Similar simplistic approaches have been adopted around the world by many governmental acculturation programmes, which expect members of minorities to step-by-step shed their cultural past if they wish to join the ranks of 'true citizens'. Stuart Hall has poignantly described this *assimilationism* as

> a new way of dealing with difference, by way of erasing it. It might say, "only some of you can belong," but "if you're here, you must look and behave like us." You must, in other words, liquidate all those differences that meant anything to you - erase them and become like us (Hall and Back 2009, p. 685).

On the political level, assimilationism may be viewed as a banal example of enacted nation-building, which posits eradication of difference and ambiguity as a prerequisite for order and stability. On a theoretical level, it reflects the old but widespread understanding of acculturation as a unidimensional construct, where 'new' cultural traits replace, rather than complement, the 'original' ones (e.g. Chun and Marìn 2003, p. xxv).

The unilinear model implies that acculturating individuals can be divided into groups according to their degree of acculturation. It also posits that with time some of them - the successful and deserving ones; in short, the good migrants (see Kwak 2018) - may be able to shed their cultural baggage and become paid-up members of the new society. This approach has been heavily criticised by many leading acculturation scientists, perhaps most notably by psychologist John W. Berry, whose work has been essential for the theoretical and methodological advances in the field of acculturation studies during the past decades (e.g. Ward 2008). According to Berry (e.g. 1992; 2003; 2010), acculturation is a multifaceted structure that should not be conceptualised in terms of linear progress, level, or degree. Furthermore, orientation towards the 'heritage culture' and orientation towards the 'receiving society' are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and acculturation studies should thus distinguish between an individual's attitudes towards her heritage culture on one hand and towards the larger society on the other; or, as Berry (2003, p. 23) puts it, between a 'relative preference for maintaining one's heritage culture and identity and a relative preference for having contact with and participating in the larger society along with other ethnocultural groups'. This bi-dimensional model, which recognises that an acculturating individual's attachment to her heritage culture(s) may be independent of her attachment to the receiving society, has been validated by extensive empirical research and now serves as a starting point for the majority of new studies on acculturation.

2.2.3 Acculturation strategies

A central feature of the bi-dimensional model is its emphasis on the psychological changes specific to each acculturating person. Berry's famous theory of acculturation strategies, also known as varieties, styles, orientations or modes of acculturation, seeks to account for these individual differences within the process of acculturation (e.g. Berry 1992; 1997).

According to Berry, acculturation strategies are constructs that guide the acculturation process. They are made up of two components: attitudes and behaviours. The former can be understood as a preference for certain type of acculturation; the latter as actual actions taken by the acculturating individual. The strategies can be operationalised as answers to the question faced by all acculturating individuals: *how to acculturate?* This question can be further divided into two subquestions considering cultural maintenance on one hand and contact and participation on the other: *1. Is the maintenance of one's heritage culture and customs considered valuable? 2. Is contact with the dominant group and other ethnocultural groups considered valuable?*[2] When dichotomised for conceptual purposes, the potential replies produce four possible answer combinations (see figure 2.1). As discussed above, *assimilation* (no – yes) means renouncing one's own culture and immersing into the dominant one, whereas *separation* (yes - no) occurs when an individual ignores the call of the dominant culture and cherishes her 'original' one. The third attitude, *integration* (yes – yes) recognises the value of both/all original and new cultures, while the fourth, *marginalisation* (no - no), reversely, denotes alienation from both/all (Berry 1997, p. 9).

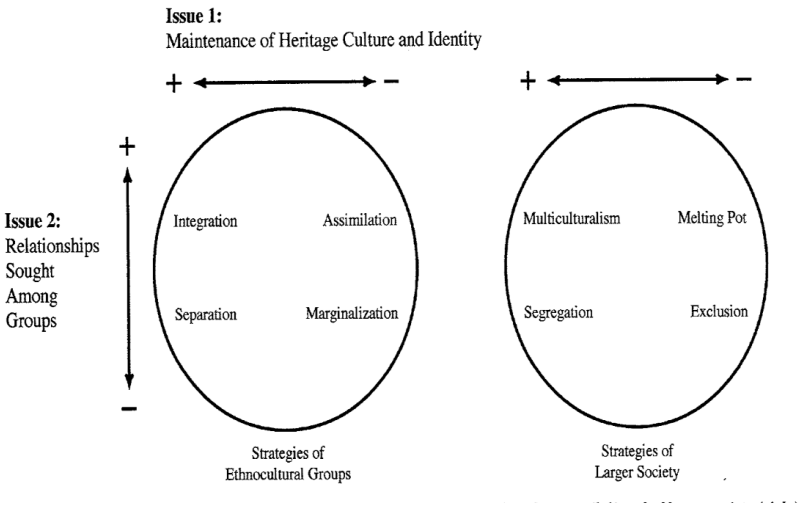

Figure 2.1: The fourfold model of acculturation strategies. Reproduced from Berry (2003, p. 23).

It has to be underlined that acculturation strategies are not static, unchangeable or mutually exclusive entities. People may and often do employ more than one strategy at the same time and/or switch between them in different do-

[2]Notably, the wording of the two questions varies slightly between different studies. As will be discussed below, these differences in operationalisation may affect the comparability of studies employing the fourfold model.

mains - for instance, preferring integration in the sphere of work but separation in close relationships. Similarly, it is important to note that the relationship between acculturation strategies and adaptation outcomes is non-linear. Instead, the former can be viewed as one of the moderating factors in the process of acculturation, with various other factors, such as perceived discrimination, immigration policies of the host society and the socio-economic status of the acculturating individual also affecting the latter. In other words, the adaptation of the acculturating individual depends, in addition to her acculturation attitudes and behaviours, on individual circumstances, the social realities of the receiving society, amd other moderating factors (Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind 2000; Berry 2009).

This relates to the often overlooked yet important question about the relationship between the acculturation strategies of the minority group members and the acculturation styles preferred and/or permitted by the majority group. Some researchers (Berry et al. 2011; Horenczyk 2009, p. 69) have suggested that the two are interrelated, and that acculturation orientations of the majority group members can also be placed onto the fourfold model of maintenance and contact. In such case, societal preference for multiculturalism[3] would broadly correspond to integration as minority strategy, with melting pot and assimilation, segregation and separation, and exclusion and marginalisation similarly connected (Berry et al. 2011; Berry 2003, p. 24; see figure 2.1).

Comparing the strategies of the acculturating individuals with those of the majority population helps highlight that circumstances play an important role in how easy or difficult it is for the acculturating individual to adopt a certain strategy. For instance, a level of cultural diversity in the receiving society and the interest among at least some members of the minority group to engage in cultural maintenance can be regarded as, if not prerequisites, then at least central facilitating factors for integration, along with the willingness of the dominant group to adapt 'its national institutions (e.g., education, health, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society' (Berry 2003, p. 24).[4]

Many studies have found integration to correlate with the most successful adaptation for acculturating individuals on psychological, sociocultural and economic levels (Berry 2003). For instance, it has been linked to lower stress levels, better health, and higher life satisfaction scores than other acculturation strategies. Furthermore, it can also benefit the receiving society through, for instance, increased competitiveness in trade (Berry 1997) - an aspect which, due to the global importance of the Russian language, is often underlined in relation to Finland's Russian-speaking minority (e.g. Viimaranta et al. 2018).

[3]Here, it has to be noted that multiculturalism does not simply mean presence of different cultural groups in a society, but also requires their inclusion and participation (Berry 2021).

[4]It should also be noted that the strategies preferred by members of the majority vary by minority group and may reflect the status of the groups in the society (Navas et al. 2005), a particularly important consideration in the case of Russian(-speaker)s who, as I will discuss in more details chapters 4 and 7, generally occupy the lowest positions in the Finnish ethnic hierarchies (Jaakkola 2009).

Berry (2021) has suggested that the efficacy of integration may be based on its relationship with social capital: integrated individuals may be able to access resources and support from two or more groups, in contrast with those scoring high on separation or assimilation, not to mention marginalisation.

In fact, marginalisation has traditionally been viewed as the worst possible strategy, a consequence of enforced cultural loss on one hand and discrimination on the other (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2011). Recently, however, some cross-cultural psychologists have challenged this view and the concept itself. Firstly, if marginalisation is understood as a consequence of involuntary exclusion, it is questionable whether it can be called a strategy (Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh 2001, pp. 43-44). Secondly, several researchers (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011; Gillespie et al. 2010; Kunst and Sam 2013) have argued that high scores in marginalisation instruments may in fact signal a multicultural or cosmopolitan outlook of an individual who rejects both 'culture of origin' and 'culture of destination' to identify with the world at large or with more general 'cultural freedom' and individualism. When this is the case, the so-called marginalisation strategy does not seem to come with the negative consequences that it has traditionally been linked with. Moreover, Rudmin (2006, p. 12) suggests that, if marginalisation is understood as involuntary exclusion, integration may prove to be a risky strategy: 'If marginalization is failure to enter preferred reference groups, then the person pursuing bicultural integration is most at risk of becoming marginalized because acceptance by two groups is more complicated and more doubtful than by one group'. These debates suggest the need to separate between marginalisation and potential cosmopolitan outlooks when measuring acculturation attitudes, a topic that I will return to in chapters 3 and 5.

2.2.4 Challenges and suggestions for improvement of the bi-dimensional model

Having been successfully applied in diverse contexts and with many different populations around the world, Berry's fourfold model of acculturation has inspired a wealth of research and remains 'the most widely accepted conceptual base for theory and research on acculturation' (Ward et al. 2018). As is to be expected, it has also faced criticism and suggestions for improvement, the most important of which will be outlined in this section. Addressing these potential problems is important, because, through its influence on public policy, acculturation research may 'affect the lives of millions of people' (Rudmin 2006, p. 2).

From the viewpoint of this thesis, the most important challenge has to do with the fact that studies using the bi-dimensional model of acculturation most often approach the questions of contact and maintenance with relation to a single majority and a single minority group. While undoubtedly more useful than the unilinear model, this approach does not entirely recognise the full cultural diversity of the contemporary world, where an increasing number of acculturating individuals identify with multiple, hybrid or supranational identities (see section 2.3.4) and where the idea of just one heritage culture is consequently

often too restrictive.

This is not always the case; first-generation migrants, for instance, may often (although by no means always) identify with 'just' one heritage culture (see chapter 6). Even in these cases, however, it has to be noted that the subculture of migrants in the receiving society is not identical to the prevalent culture in their country of origin. According to Cohen (2011), the community of migrants is likely to differ from the community of their so-called co-ethnics 'back home' in several important ways. There may be notable differences between those who decide to emigrate and those who do not to begin with, and these are likely to be reinforced by the experience of migration. Furthermore, the culture(s) of the sending societies do not remain static throughout the years, but are affected by internal changes and by the processes of globalisation, including migration and emigration (Cohen 2011, p. 6).

To address these potential problems, Cohen (2011) has proposed a typology of 8 acculturation attitudes, a model which, importantly in the context of this research, was partly informed by empirical research among Russian-Jewish migrants in Israel. In Cohen's model, a third aspect, that of attitudes towards the community of 'co-migrants', is added to the traditional referents of 'home culture' and 'host society'. Horenczyk (2009) has made similar recommendations. Adding empirical support to these suggestions, in their study on Russian-speaking migrants in Israel, Germany and the US, Elias and Shoren-Zeltser (2006) found that identification with the larger Russian-speaking diaspora could in fact in certain contexts be separated from identification with the sending society. While for reasons outlined above in chapter 1, I prefer to speak of Russian-speaking communities or minorities instead of co-migrants, the addition of this third referent proved very useful in the context of the current study (see chapter 6).

Yet these adjustments alone are likely to be insufficient, as the second variable of the bi-dimensional model, that of the receiving society, is no less ambiguous than the first. Firstly, the strategies preferred and employed by minorities in relation to the dominant group are likely to differ from the strategies preferred and employed in relation to other ethnocultural groups they encounter within the receiving society. Secondly, the dominant group in itself is not a homogeneous cultural whole: there may be great variation between attitudes and actions towards men and women or the rich and the poor, to mention just two examples. Thirdly, there may also be notable cultural and practical differences within the societies of residence on the regional and local levels. In short, acculturation often takes place in a barrage of different cultures and subcultures - and while it would be impossible for a researcher to consider them all, we should at least seek to identify and address the most significant ones in the context of our work. On top of this, studies suggest that acculturation research needs to better account for transnationalism - the idea that 'belonging, loyalty and a sense of attachment can be found and retained in more than one locality' (Klingenberg et al. 2020, drawing on Vertovec 2009) - which has arguably made migrants less dependent on the attitudes of the host society and thus increased the flexibility in the domains of acculturation and identification

(van Oudenhoven and Ward 2013, pp. 89-91).

In fact, understanding the different forms and manifestations of transnationalism is important for understanding the processes of acculturation in the 21st century. For instance, Colic-Peisker (2006) has differentiated between ethnic and cosmopolitan transnationalism, which are lived in two different ways: the first as bridging the distance to the homeland, the second in the space of global mobility. The connection between transnationalism and cosmopolitanism is particularly interesting when considering the ambiguity surrounding the concept of marginalisation, discussed above: Kunst and Sam (2013, p. 226) have argued that the choice between heritage and majority cultures is no longer necessarily required and that 'the involvement with a third cultural sphere—a global culture—may make presumably marginalized individuals less marginalized than they on first sight seem to be'.

Many suggestions for improvement of the fourfold model have also centred around the need for greater recognition of contextual factors in the process of acculturation. For instance, it has been suggested that the relational fit between the acculturation preferences of minority groups and the acculturation policies enforced by the state can be consensual, problematic or conflictual and that this affects the process of acculturation (Bourhis et al. 1997, p. 371). The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM) proposed by Navas et al. (2005) differentiates between the preferred acculturation attitudes and the strategies actually adopted, as well as between different domains of acculturation, highlighting that acculturating individuals prefer different strategies in different situations. Drawing on Leunda (1996), Navas et al. (2005) outline seven interrelated domains of acculturation - political and governmental system; labour and work; economic (consumer habits, ways of managing income); family (marital relationships, children, values); social (friendships and other social relationships); religious beliefs and customs; and values, principles, and ways of thinking - highlighting the complexity and relativity of the acculturation process.

Another, and perhaps the most commonly mentioned, challenge of the fourfold model relates its conceptual ambiguity, the conversation surrounding the marginalisation attitude, discussed above, being one example of this. Psychometric faults, such as unclear wording of the questions, interdependence of the variables, and lack of control for response bias have also been pointed out (Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh 2001, pp. 44-45). Chirkov (2009a) has questioned 'the unsupported assumption that acculturation can be studied as any natural process by looking for probabilistic regularities and testing them using the logic of hypothetico-deductive reasoning'. Some scholars have challenged the integrationist perspective inherent to much research employing the fourfold model, drawing on studies showing that acculturation or separation may in certain contexts prove equally or more beneficial (see Rudmin 2006; Kang 2006).

Notably, the bi-dimensional model also shares many challenges of acculturation research in general, one of the central ones being the question of time. While acculturation is a 'process that unfolds over time', longitudinal studies addressing it remain relatively rare and are much needed for gaining a deeper understanding of the process (Kunst 2021, p. 2; see also Chirkov 2009a; Ward

2008, Ward and Geeraert 2016.) Finally, there have been calls for more methodological rigour in the study of acculturation in terms of increased reflexivity, greater reliance on interpretative social science for understanding and interpreting the experiences of acculturating individuals, as well as following the highest standards of psychometric approach, such as representative sampling of communities (Chirkov 2009a, 2009b; Rudmin 2009b).[5]

A lot of the criticism of the fourfold model has been directly addressed by Berry (see 2009, 2021). For instance, in response to the observations that individuals are not always free to choose their preferred strategy, Berry (2009) has highlighted the role of the receiving society and the acculturation expectations of the majority population, as discussed above (see figure 2.1). With relation to the integrationist perspective, he has pointed out that, despite occasional variations, the evidence suggesting a relationship between integration and better adaptation outcomes is 'remarkably consistent' (Berry 2021, p. 314).

Some of the other challenges outlined above are resolved if we renounce - as much recent research has - the idea that the four acculturation strategies should be understood as mutually exclusive. Based on the understanding that the same individual may agree with more than one strategy or prefer different strategies in different situations, a study should not seek to determine which acculturation strategy the respondent 'has', but rather measure how strongly she agrees with each of them. The problem of conceptual ambiguity can also be largely resolved if researchers explicitly address the difference between the 'public' and academic use of acculturation and take care to carefully consider and disclose what they actually measure when measuring orientation towards different groups.[6]

Other points of criticism, however, require more careful consideration. Perhaps the most important of these in the context of this study is the fact that, as discussed above, the bicultural model in its most commonly used form remains somewhat insufficient for capturing the lived reality of those who — as migrants and other minority members often do — define and redefine themselves 'within the complex tapestry of ingroup and outgroup cultures' (Horenczyk 2009, p. 72), facing demands from a large variety of different social groups, belonging to more than one minority, and having to accommodate more than one type of majority.[7]. In the context of the notable heterogeneity of Finland's Russian-speaking minority (see chapter 4), finding out how this diversity impacts acculturation is

[5] As I will suggest in chapter 3, the mixed methods approach that I chose to employ in the context of this study allowed for both representative sampling and for a reflective approach to acculturation.

[6] In practice, many if not most acculturation instruments combine variables measuring different domains; this was also the approach that I adopted in creation of the survey questionnaire for this research (see chapter 3).

[7] It should be noted that Berry and Sam (2016, p. 24) have pointed out that, in its original form, the second dimension of the bidimensional framework referred to 'contact with other groups in the larger society' rather than the mainstream culture as which it is now often conceptualised, and as such allows the researchers to account for multiple other groups. This is an important clarification, although the issue of how to best address the acculturation of those with more than one 'heritage culture' still remains (see chapter 6).

one of the challenges of this study.

Last but not least, it is also important to question to what extent the developments related to the bi-dimensional model and acculturation research in general are reflected in the everyday realities of migrants and other minorities. As Varjonen (2013, p. 13) points out, even when a prevalent political discourse in a country recognises acculturation as a two-way process in which policies of the host society and attitudes of the majority members also play their part, the main responsibility for the 'success' of the acculturation process is often left on the shoulders of 'the Others'; acculturation scholars should take care to avoid reproducing these discourses.

2.2.5 Adaptation

As discussed in the previous sections, acculturation is generally a long-term process that does not have one, easily achievable end. Nevertheless, with time it can lead to adaptation, the more 'long-term ways in which people rearrange their lives and settle down to a more-or-less satisfactory existence' (Berry 2006, p. 52). Adaptation as a general term is used broadly to signify human adjustment to issues such as climate change. In the context of acculturation, it refers to 'changes that take place in an individual in response to the experience of acculturation' (Berry 2021, p. 313).

Like acculturation, adaptation has been and continues to be defined and operationalised in various ways. It is also a multifaceted construct, and researchers commonly differentiate between different domains or categories of adaptation. The most common of these is the division between sociocultural and psychological (or behavioural and emotional) adaptation: the former refers to being skilled and able to successfully manage daily life in the intercultural setting, the latter to mental well-being and life satisfaction (Berry 2021).

I find this division useful. However, from the start, my fieldwork showed that research participants' adaptation varied greatly not just between but also within these domains. For instance, while the majority of participants had no trouble adapting to such cultural markers as food or dress, many reported experiencing difficulties with relation to social adaptation. Friendship, in particular, was a domain that many interviewees found challenging. Based on these observations, I suggest that it might be more fruitful to approach sociocultural adaptation as three separate categories: language use, cultural adaptation, and social adaptation. This proposed division, and the reasons behind it, will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

As adaptation can be viewed as an outcome of acculturation, the challenges surrounding the former concept are very similar to those of the latter, discussed above. Particularly notable for the purposes of this thesis is the division between the academic and political use of the words. As with acculturation, which is sometimes confounded with assimilation in policy documents, being 'well adapted' is frequently conceptualised with emphasis on learning the cultural traits and conventions of the receiving society. As a consequence, adaptation is often operationalised in terms of language skills, employment, and the knowledge

and observance of local customs – relatively easily measurable factors that are often the focus of official acculturation services (Bijl and Verweij 2012). In the Finnish context (which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4), this is reflected, inter alia, in the rather idealised images of 'the Finnish way of life' constructed in the official acculturation materials (Bodström 2020).

The limitations of this narrow approach to adaptation become easily recognisable when considering the situation of children from multicultural families and the so-called second-generation migrants. Raised in their country of residence, they often face no problems when it comes to the outward cultural markers of adaptation, such as language or familiarity with local customs. They can, nevertheless, experience challenges relating to other types of adaptation, particularly where experiences of discrimination or ambient pressure for monoculturalism are present in the environment.

Overall, it is important to note that there is significant variance in adaptation outcomes between individuals. While both minority position and the experience of migration can be viewed as potential risk factors for social and psychological problems, they do not inevitably lead to them: adaptation outcomes range from very negative to very positive and, like the process of acculturation itself, depend on a variety of circumstances and characteristics (Berry 1992, p. 69). Moreover, it is clear that what is understood by successful adaptation also varies both by communities and by individuals. As such, one of the tasks of this research was to clarify what members of Finland's Russian-speaking community themselves understand by 'successful adaptation' - an important theme that I will return to in chapter 5.

2.3 Collective Identities

2.3.1 Constructed images of self

'Identity', just as the social phenomenon it refers to, acquires meaning through context (Brubaker 2004). Defining the powerful, multidimensional and highly ambiguous concept is thus markedly complicated and requires an overview of at least the most important of the many ways in which it is employed.

To begin with, identity is both a *category of practice* - used by politicians as a tool of persuasion and by 'lay people' as a way of capturing their 'everyday social experience' - and a *category of analysis* around which a significant part of social research of recent years has been centred (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, p. 4-5). As Brubaker and Cooper point out, there are significant differences between these two uses of the word. As a category of practice, identities are for the most part viewed and positioned as solid, stable and natural entities. In academic discussions, in turn, identities are increasingly conceptualised as hybrid, liquid and socially constructed creations that are often uncertain and rarely permanent.

Secondly, and similarly to acculturation (see section 2.2), identities function on different levels. First of these is the level of *personal identity*, consisting

of factors that differentiate an individual from other people. The second is the level of *collective* or *social identities* that unite a person to the world around her based on what is arguably 'a fundamental "need to belong" [that is] an innate feature of human nature' (Brewer and Gardner 1996, p. 83). Some researchers further divide between *interpersonal identities*, based on social connections with certain specific others, and *collective identities* stemming from (imagined) membership in more impersonal social groups, Anderson's (2006) famous imagined communities (see Brewer and Gardner, 1996). Handler (1994, p. 28) has also identified a third level of identity, that of the relationship between the personal and collective self-understandings. Consequently, while in this work my main focus is on the collective or social identifications,[8] the analysis will have to also take into account personal identity and the relation between the two levels. (Handler 1994; Szabo and Ward 2015.)

Thirdly, identity has been conceptualised in many different ways even within the realm of the social sciences. For instance, Stuart Hall, one of the most important cultural theorists of the last decades, sees identities as 'points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (1996, p. 6), while political scientist Charles Tilly has described them as 'social arrangements reinforced by socially constructed and continuously renegotiated stories' (2002, p. Xiii). For Henri Tajfel, one of the fathers of the highly influential Social Identity Theory, identity is an individual's 'knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of his membership' (1981, p. 258).

Zygmunt Bauman, in turn, connects the concept to his highly significant analysis of consumerism, describing a *homo eligens*, the completely incomplete and permanently impermanent *choosing man* for whom identity has become a 'lifelong task' and who is, ultimately, weighed down by his compulsive search for 'ready-made, consumer friendly and publicly legible identity badges' (2013a, no pagination). In this view, identities are self-ascribed, unfixed and decidedly temporary commodities, marked by choices made by the individual and always positioned in relation to 'the other' (Bauman 2004).

While Bauman's *homo eligens* resembles a caricature, it manages to poignantly capture two themes central to the contemporary narratives of identity, both of which arguably gain particular significance in relation to migrants and other minorities. The first is the emphasis on difference and otherness - two concepts so significant in the construction of identities that the phrase 'identity politics' has become synonymous with 'the politics of difference' (Darian-Smith 2015, p. 351). Much of their current relevance can be traced back to Jacques Derrida's writings on *différance*. According to its author, this neographism is 'neither a word nor a concept', but rather a strategic note, a juncture of epochal writings on difference (Derrida 2002, p. 279). It combines non-identity and sameness, and gains significance in the intersection of similarity and difference — an intersection familiar to many members of cultural minorities.

[8]The terms 'social identity' and 'collective identity' are often used interchangeably, and I will treat these terms as synonymous for the purposes of this thesis.

Stuart Hall (2009), among others, has borrowed Derrida's idea of différance as negative determination to accentuate the role that antagonisms and contradictions play in the construction of the self and to highlight that the complexity of identity is based on the inner antagonism of its parts. According to Hall, the time of stable and clear-cut permanent identities that have given certainty to people's lives has come to an end, to be replaced by the 'fragmented and fractured' contemporary identity productions that are built across 'different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions' and find themselves in the constant 'process of change and transformation' (Hall 2009, p. 4).

In fact, change is the second central aspect of contemporary identities crystallised in Bauman's homo eligens. As the choosing man wanders the ails of the identity supermarket, his real problem is 'not how to build identity, but how to preserve it; whatever you build in the sand is unlikely to be a castle' (Bauman 1996, p. 23). Indeed, it could be argued that instead of (or at least in addition to) the primordial pillars of identity, such as tradition, ancestry, or physical proximity, contemporary identities are based on continuous renegotiation and reinvention (Eriksen 2002).

In this thesis, I adopt this constructivist outlook on identities in recognising that they are fragmented, dynamic, potentially flexible and sometimes temporary social structures that are expressed, negotiated and built through public discourse and in the everyday life (Edensor 2002; Hall 1996). Approached from this position, identity 'is a symbolic construction, an image of ourselves, which we build in a process of interaction with others' (Mach 2007, p. 54). As such, it also related to Barth's (1969) notion of boundary drawing, discussed above.

Here, it should be noted that emphasising the constructed nature of identifications does not equal denying their importance. On the contrary, I recognise that identity still has the power to separate and to unite, and that identities are 'socially "real" inasmuch as socially significant facts are based on ideas of identities' (Kertzer and Arel 2002, p. 20). It could even be argued that identities are more topical now than they have been ever before. While from the constructivist perspective (and in contrast with most popular standpoints) they have never appeared particularly stable or natural, their fluid, constructed and potentially temporary character has been accentuated by the monumental changes of the recent decades, such as the accelerating processes of globalisation and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In people who have experienced them firsthand — including most members of the Russian-speaking diaspora — these social shifts have often led to a more active exploration and questioning of issues related to belonging, a process sometimes branded *identity crisis* (Szabo and Ward 2015, p. 14).

2.3.2 Is identity still useful?

Within academia, a different 'crisis of identity' has been brewing for the past decades - one questioning the usefulness and power of the concept of identity. Considering the central role that identity has played in the social sciences, it

is unsurprising that the term has attracted close scrutiny. Perhaps the most famous critique of the concept has been presented by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) who claim that it has become too ambiguous to serve social sciences well. According to them, the majority of academic writings use identity in a sense which is either too 'hard' or too 'soft'. The former, much in line with the everyday use of the word, puts emphasis on homogeneity of social groups and fails to question its primordial premises. In contrast, the latter – and, in contemporary academic discussions, much more common – understanding of identity explicitly distances itself from essentialism.[9] However, in doing so – often through 'clichéd constructivism' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, p. 11) rather than careful considerations –, it risks becoming too weak for analytical work.

Brubaker and Cooper were not the first ones to point out this problem. In his historical overview of the academic use of identity, Philip Gleason (1983) documented how the rapid spread of the word since the 1950's had led it to the brink of meaninglessness. Handler (1994, p. 29), too, has highlighted the tension between the essentialist and constructivist analysis of identities. The concern is warranted: despite the widely shared academic understanding of identities as non-essentialist and non-stable constructs, the tendency for groupism, the treatment of ethnicity, nation, and other social groups as bounded entities and fundamental social facts, still persists also within the academia (Brubaker 2004). Thus, identities are simultaneously presented as both indispensable and unnecessary, fundamental and impermanent, liberating and oppressing. Even those who recognise the constructed nature of identity sometimes fail to distinguish categories of practice from categories of analysis. Consequently, the scholarly use of the word often reflects the 'commonsense', primordial view on identities. In combination with constructivist approach, this essentialising, hard use of the concept leads to metaphysical inconsistency (Bendle 2002; Brubaker 1997; Handler 1994).

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) go as far as suggesting that this conceptual ambiguity makes identity unsuited for analytical work. If identity is fluid, they write,

> how can we understand the ways in which self-understandings may harden, congeal, and crystallize? If it is constructed, how can we understand the sometimes coercive force of external identifications? If it is multiple, how do we understand the terrible singularity that is often striven for - and sometimes realized - by politicians seeking to transform mere categories into unitary and exclusive groups? (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p. 1).

The theoretical burden placed on identity can not be carried by just one word, they argue, and identity needs to be replaced, preferably by a series of

[9] Ethnic essentialism can be defined as belief in the shared underlying essence of ethnic groups as well as in ethnic constancy or the immutability of an individual's ethnicity (Woods 2017, p. 546).

concepts. For this purpose, they propose three cluster of potential substitutes that reflect the different shades of meaning captured by identity: identification and categorisation; self-understanding and social location; and commonality, connectedness, and groupness (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000).

The points raised by Brubaker and Cooper are important, and their argument is persuasive, yet I remain unconvinced that the solutions they propose are the most viable and practical ones. Take, for example, *identification*, one of the proposed substitutes. A widely used term, identification is inseparably linked with identity (e.g. Gleason 1983): while the latter is a label, the former 'refers to the classifying act itself' and is thus 'best viewed as inherently processual' (Rummens 2003, pp. 12-13). Identification's main advantage over identity is indeed that it highlights the action, the process, and the changing nature of identities. Yet I tend to agree with Jenkins (2008, pp. 14-15), who points out that it 'isn't much of an improvement, because it is stylistically so cumbersome' and chooses to 'unapologetically, use both terms'. Like Jenkins, I understand the concepts of identity and identification as synonyms and will be using them as such for the purposes of this thesis.

More importantly, I would question whether there is something inherently different about identification — and the other suggested substitutes of identity — that would make them better suited for analytical work. I would suggest that we can distinguish between the different phenomena grouped under identity without getting rid of the concept itself. For instance, the distinction between relational identification (position within a certain relationship, such as family) and categorical identification (membership in a group that shares certain categorical attributes, such as ethnicity or language), proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000, p. 15), is notably similar to the concepts of interpersonal and collective identities, touched upon above. As with the concept of acculturation, discussed in detail in section 2.2, I suggest that it is not the word itself but rather its inexact usage that may bring along problems.

Overall, I regard identity capable of addressing complex theoretical and practical issues and prefer to continue its use. As Shaw and Stewart (2003, p. 2) point out, 'embracing a term which has acquired – in some quarters – pejorative meanings can lead to a more challenging critique of the assumptions on which those meanings are based than can its mere avoidance'. In the next sections, I will discuss and challenge some of the long-held assumptions surrounding the concept of identity.

2.3.3 Intertwined self-understandings

The focus of this work is on certain types of collective identities: the cultural, ethnic, religious and national ones. On one hand, the concepts are often used in conjunction with one another, and demarcation between them is thus not easy. On the other hand, the study of culture, ethnicity, religion and nationalism, has often been unduly fragmented and compartmentalised between different disciplines and paradigms, causing many of them to lack one, widely accepted definition (Brubaker 2009).

One common way of differentiating between ethnic and national identities is to understand them as structures functioning on different levels. From this approach, national identity appears as a 'superordinate group identity for both the majority and the minority groups' (Leong et al. 2020, p. 17). Mirroring the old conceptualisation of acculturation, discussed above, identity is also often presented as a linear construct, consisting of ethnic identity or attachment to the 'culture of origin' on one hand and national identity or attachment to the receiving society on the other (Torres et al. 2019, p. 258). This model may work when discussing identities of minority members who identify with one (ethnic) group, but seems less suitable for capturing the lived realities of people with multiple ethnic and/or national identities. Moreover, as Delanty (2009, p. 109) has argued, it is becoming more and more difficult to differentiate between ethnic and national identities. In practice, then, trying to separate between these forms of collective identities feels somewhat futile, not only because their definitions are often ambiguous, making any comparisons unreliable, but also because it can be questioned whether this separation is really necessary in the first place (ibid.).

Of course, an individual's identity includes more than just the cultural, ethnic, and national identifications. Categories such as gender and sexuality may be of equal or greater importance for an individual's self-understanding, and different pieces of identity often become highlighted in context. This complexity of belonging is poignantly captured in the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991), which acknowledges that all individuals belong to multiple groups, collectives and categories that, taken together, have consequences that are larger than the sum of their parts (Dubrow 2008, p. 86).

Drawing on intersectionality, Wing (2002, p. 161) uses the term 'multiplicative identities' to highlight the wealth and diversity of belongings that make up a human being and the advantages and disadvantages that follow from them. She emphasizes that they cannot be pulled apart: 'If you multiply my identities together, you have one individual being' (2002, p. 163). An interviewee in Bowleg's (2013, p. 758) study on black gay and bisexual men's experiences of intersectionality expresses a similar feeling when talking about his identities: 'once you've blended the cake you can't take the parts back to the main ingredients'.

The ideas of intersectionality and multiplicative identities are helpful for understanding, for example, how 'being a Russian-speaker in Finland' comes to play in different ways and gains different meanings in the lives of a successful young professional, an Ingrian Finnish pensioner, and a young single mother (see chapters 6 and 7). While it would hardly be possible for a researcher to address or even consider every single one of the many different identities that an individual possesses, the variety of her belongings - and, just as importantly, the interplay between them - should be recognised and taken into account where possible.

My choice of concentrating on certain collective identities over others is certainly driven in part by practical considerations. At the same time, out of all the unstable and ambiguous identities that individuals are assumed to possess,

ethnic and national loyalties have often been regarded as the most central and formative ones (e.g. Daatland 1997; Suny 1993). Wing (2002, p. 163-166) lists them as types of 'major identities' along with gender, age, race, skin colour, language, sexual orientation, and immigration and marital status. In accordance with the constructivist paradigm, I consider the 'special' position acquired by these forms of identification to be at least partly a consequence of tendentious manipulation and carefully constructed strategies of the political elites (Baumann 1999). While recognising that identities and other categorisations are not only beneficial for 'the ruling classes' – 'ordinary people' often also perceive them as helpful since they create meaning, generate order, facilitate social interaction and thus participate in making life more predictable (Mole 2007, pp. 3-10) — the next section will discuss identifications that question and challenge the essentialist understandings of ethnic, national and cultural groups.

2.3.4 Multiple, hybrid and supranational identities

The ideas of difference and change as constitutive parts of contemporary identities, as outlined in the previous sections, have proved particularly useful for the study of migrants and other ethnocultural minorities.

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, their status is explicitly based on the 'otherness' that separates them from the majority population; in fact, being a member of a minority group can be an identity in itself (e.g. Wing 2002, p. 164). Secondly, the malleability of identities often becomes highlighted in the process of migration. According to some views, immigration 'causes a serious shake-up of individual's identity' (Akhtar 1999, p. 76) and, consequently, leads to a lifelong project of identity reconstruction and renegotiation. This is is likely to be an exaggeration[10] in case of many migrants; yet even those previously convinced of the naturality and stability of their identities sometimes end up questioning these views in the process of migration (see chapter 6).

This questioning can be challenging, and is frequently described as a 'crisis of identity' (e.g Szabo 2015). Yet many members of minorities 'live amongst other minorities and move seamlessly in and out of relationships, languages and cultural settings with a fine attunement to them all' (Sreberny 2005, p. 453). Difficulties, if they arise, are not necessarily produced by incompatibility of two or more 'ethnicities', 'nations' or 'cultures' per se, but rather by the ambient pressure for clear, simple and unambiguous identifications. As Eriksen (2002, p. 63) puts it, in 'a social environment where one is expected to have a well-defined ethnic identity, it may be psychologically and socially difficult to "bet on two horses"'.

Of course, as mentioned above, it is important to avoid overemphasising the malleability of identity and the extent to which people - including members of cultural minorities - perceive their identities as flexible, constructed, or open to change. At the same time, most migrants and other minority members lack the

[10] In fact, some researchers have been accused of overemphasising the malleability of identity in a world where a large part of its inhabitants still view their ethnic and national belonging(s) as something natural, stable, and unchangeable.

opportunity, often available to others, of taking their (ethnic and national) identities for granted. Zygmunt Bauman (2004) describes this on a very personal level in his account of receiving an honorary doctorate at the Prague University. According to the university tradition, the national anthem of the country the recipient 'belongs' to is played during the conferment ceremony. Bauman, who was born in Poland but lived in the UK for many decades, was expected to choose between the anthems of these two countries. Yet he found the decision very difficult: one of the countries had driven him away, stripped him of his citizenship; in the other, he had become a naturalised citizen, yet never stopped being a newcomer. In the end, he chose to play the European anthem - Beethoven's Ode to Joy - which not only enclosed both of the original options, but also held a deeper symbolic meaning.

Bauman's choice is a poignant reminder of the artificial and arbitrary nature of ethnic and national divisions. As we have discussed above, there are more and more people in the world who find choosing between the 'national anthems' not only difficult but fundamentally unnecessary, preferring either to play several at once or, as Bauman, select something else completely. Scholars have tried to capture these 'new' subtypes of identity through many similar but not necessarily interchangeable terms, including but not limited to 'hybrid', 'mixed', 'creolised', 'transnational', 'multicultural' and 'cosmopolitan' - a chain of concepts used 'to get beyond purportedly bounded and fixed understandings of groups and cultures which, fairly or not, have been associated with studies of ethnicity' (Vertovec 2007, p. 965; see also Cohen and Sheringham 2016).

Even in the context of constructivist approach to belonging, much of the discussion around multiple identities has tended to focus on dual identification, still ignoring the full spectrum of 'the complex tapestry of ingroup and outgroup cultures' (Horenczyk 2009, p. 72) through which many individuals define and redefine themselves (e.g. Saha and Watson 2014). To avoid this, this study will make use of two concepts that are closely related, yet have significant differences that will, I hope, help it make better sense of the complex field of contemporary identifications.

First of the terms is *hybrid*. As discussed above, our identities are hybrid to begin with in that they combine several types of identifications (sex, age, race, and so forward). However, the hybridity that is of greater interest to this study is that which manifests itself *within* a certain type of identity, as a combination of more than one ethnic, national or cultural sense of belonging. Sometimes, divisions are made between hybrid and *multiple* identities.The border between the two concepts is somewhat blurry, but is most commonly conceptualised on the basis of whether the two or more identities are experienced as fused (e.g. Finno-Russian) or as separate (e.g. Finnish and Russian), a division that I will return to in chapter 6.

The other concept that I wish to employ for analytical purposes is *cosmopolitan*. Hybrid identities are often cosmopolitan insofar as they can help 'describe diversity' (Ziemer 2009, p. 412) that extends beyond two nations, states or ethnicities. However, here I intend to use the concept of cosmopolitan identity to fill a more specific gap: that of a *supranational* identification, most often

exemplified by those who describe themselves as 'global citizens' or 'citizens of the world'.

While there is still little empirical information available on cosmopolitans, previous research has shed light on the various ways and situations in which individuals might identify as cosmopolites or *with* cosmopolitanism (Pichler 2009). For Grinstein and Wathieu (2012, p. 337), a cosmopolitan is someone whose 'values, interests and behaviors are cross-cultural' and who views herself as a citizen of the world. In her study on Armenian youth in Southern Russia, Ulrike Ziemer (2009, p. 431) noticed that her participants occasionally drew on cosmopolitanism as an identity resource that helped them combine belonging in terms of ethnicity and multicultural location. Paul Kennedy (2012, p. 35), in turn, found that for skilled EU migrants living in Manchester, cosmopolitan orientations meant not only 'escaping from the overriding dominance of one set of social affiliations' but also being propelled 'towards a new and much broader set of commitments and dependencies'.

It is in fact interesting to consider how the European Union[11] relates to cosmopolitan identification. Binding together - at least in theory - people from nearly 30 nation-states and a relatively large geographical area, the union is often understood as a cosmopolitan project. Research has shown that majority of Europeans experience at least some level of attachment to the EU, and Schlenker (2013, p. 50) reported a strong positive correlation between European and cosmopolitan identifications, concluding that 'Europe and the European project might indeed have a special relationship to cosmopolitanism'.

In a similar vein, it is interesting to consider how the legacy of the Soviet Union may affect the identifications of Finland's Russian-speaking residents today - a topic that is of particular interest of this study, as a large part of research participants were born in the (former) Soviet Union. Rogers Brubaker (1997), among others, has claimed that, contrary to the common perception, the Soviet rule worked to strengthen the ethnonational consciousness of its citizens. According to him, the USSR was a uniquely and truly multinational state which institutionalised nationality on two different levels: through the territorial concept of nationhood and the ethnocultural category of personal nationality. At the same time, many Soviet citizens, and especially native speakers of Russian, often identified with the Soviet Union rather than or in addition to any national or ethnocultural groups (Daatland 1997).

This division can still be seen in the post-Soviet countries today, a good example being the Russian linguistic division between 'russkii' and 'rossiiskii': The first refers to ethnic and cultural 'Russianness', the latter to a 'civic Russian nation, comprised of all the citizens [of the Russian Federation] regardless of their ethnic and cultural background' (Tolz 2003, p. 238). While the majority of Russian citizens identify as 'russkii', and many 'russkii' are also citizens of Russia, one term is not a prerequisite for the other - rather, the two concepts exist on different levels. I suggest that familiarity with this multi-level system of identifications may make it easier for certain Russian-speakers to identify as

[11] Finland joined the EU in 1995.

both Finnish and a member of another ethnic or national group. On the other hand, this may be hindered by the relative cultural homogeneity of Finland, to be discussed in chapter 4.

2.3.5 The relationship between identity and acculturation

Acculturation and identity are both extensively studied in relation to migrants and other cultural minorities. However, surprisingly little research has been dedicated to charting the relationship between them, and there is a clear need for more research on the topic (Szabo and Ward 2015).

It is widely accepted that acculturation brings about changes in individual's self-understanding (Ryder et al. 2000). This is particularly true for ethnic, national and religious identities that often become highlighted and challenged in culturally diverse environments. In fact, as mentioned above, the experience of immigration is often thought to lead to a crisis of identity (Szabo and Ward 2015). It has also been suggested that, on one hand, the process of acculturation enhances individual's understanding of and interest in her ethnic identity, and, on the other, that identity strength 'will determine much of the individual's response to acculturation' (Liebkind 2006, p. 80). At the same time, a correlation between the two constructs has not always been found in previous studies, and it seems likely that acculturation does not automatically imply changes in individuals' perceptions of their ethnic/national identity (Liebkind 2006).

Prior research has found identification with 'one's own' ethnic group to correlate with separation, identification with the (majority) nation with assimilation, combination of both with integration and lack of any clear ethnic/national identity with marginalization (Berry 2003; Bourhis et al. 1997).[12] This approach does, however, seem somewhat simplistic. Firstly, the majority of the studies examining relationship between acculturation and identity do so with an explicit emphasis on bicultural identification, with ethnic or heritage identity on one side and identification with the nation or society of settlement on the other. As discussed above, this idea of two, and only two, distinctive cultures or groups forming the basis of an individual's identification or acculturation does not always reflect the reality on the ground. In any case, it does not fully capture the wealth of different ethnic, national and cultural identities that exist among the members of Finland's Russian-speaking minority; identities that, as I will seek to show in chapter 6, are often intersecting, interconnected, hybrid, and supranational.

Secondly, the relationship between ethnic identity and acculturation is further obscured by the overlap of questions used to measure them. Some studies seem to use identity as a proxy for acculturation. Even when this is not the case, many acculturation questionnaires include items measuring ethnic identification, which, in turn, is often conceptualised as 'the degree' of acculturation (e.g. Phinney 2003). Furthermore, identity and acculturation share similar

[12] As discussed above, recent studies have also linked marginalisation to individualism and cosmopolitan identifications.

building blocks: language proficiency and use, for example, are often employed as central indicators of acculturation and adaptation, but language is also considered to be one of the most important components of ethnic identity (see e.g. Kang 2006). This problem is, again, especially pivotal in relation to Finland's Russian-speakers, who are often - including in this study - grouped together on the basis of language, rather than ethnicity, nationality, or religion.

In any case, it is important to note that studies conducted in other countries and among other minorities can not be directly generalised to the Russian-speakers living in Finland. As discussed above, one of the factors to consider here is the heritage of the Soviet Union, the fall of which affected many Russian-speakers and led to 'decomposition, construction, and reconstruction of collective identities' (Mach 2007, p. 54). Furthermore, in contrast to the multiethnic USA and Canada, where a large part of acculturation studies have been conducted, Finland is still a relatively culturally homogenous country (Leong et al. 2020). As per Berry's acculturation framework, these differences and other moderating factors need to be accounted for when studying acculturation.

2.4 Religion

2.4.1 Defining religion

Like the concepts presented earlier in this literature review, religion is an ambiguous term that is used in many, often contradictory ways within the public as well as the academic discourse and is thus difficult to pin down (Hamilton 2001, p. 12-24). The difficulties in defining religion are also a testament to the breadth of the phenomena that the concept seeks to capture: religion 'may encompass the supernatural, the non-natural, theism, deism, atheism, monotheism, polytheism, and both finite and infinite deities; it may also include practices, beliefs, and rituals that almost totally defy circumscription and definition' (Hood et al. 2018, p. 8).

Analytical perspectives to defining religion can generally be divided into three groups: substantive, functional, and constructivist (Hjelm 2016). The substantive definitions are often formulated as an answer to the question *what is religion*? An example of an early, basic substantive definition is provided by Tylor (1903, p. 424), who defined religion as 'belief in spiritual beings'. Functional definitions, in turn, focus on *what religion does*. While zooming in on the function of religion in such ways is without doubt useful, these definitions are often too broad to be truly meaningful (Hamilton 2001, p. 19).

The third perspective, and the one adopted by me in the context of this study, is the constructivist approach. It is characterised by an openness towards the definition of religion, focusing instead on how religion becomes defined through action (Hamilton 2001; Hjelm 2016). The emphasis is on religions as social groups, venues of social interaction, and (often) powerful social institutions that can and do affect the social world (Zuckerman 2003, p. 23-24).

Here, it is useful to differentiate between religion and religiosity. While

the former could be likened to 'ethnicity, something that for most people is transmitted to them rather than being chosen by them', the latter refers to the 'degree of religious commitment' (Voas 2007, p. 145). Another useful distinction could be made between official and non-official forms of religion. As McGuire (2008) points out, the former is characterised by well-defined doctrines, ritual conformity and other forms of institutional specialisation, while the latter refers to unorganised, privatised and changeable practices and beliefs falling outside the control of official religions.

Perhaps religion is too complex a concept to be captured in just one word and should instead be defined as a series of (sub)concepts (Hamilton 2001, p. 23). This stance is reflected in Glock's (1962) five universal dimensions of religious commitment. In Glock's categorisation, *ideological* dimension stands for belief, *ritualistic* for expected practice, *experiental* for emotional relationship with God or a higher power, *intellectual* for being familiar with the scripture and the basic tenets of one's faith, and *consequential* for consequences (health, well-being, happiness, etc.) of leading a religious life.

Molendijk (1999, p. 4) calls for a pragmatic and contextualised approach to defining religion. Following his advice, instead of trying to reach a universal definition of what religion is, my use of the concept centres around how it fits the purpose of this study - understanding the role that religion plays in the process of acculturation of Russian-speakers in Finland. With this in mind, I initially approached religion through four dimensions that I thought would be central to the acculturation of Russian-speakers: a) religion as belief b) religion as membership of religious organisation(s) c) religion as practice and d) religion as identity.

Max Weber has famously suggested that researchers should only attempt to define religion at the end of their investigation (1965, p. 1; cited in Hamilton 2001, p. 12). In fact, my definition and operationalisation of religion changed slightly during the fieldwork, as I gained a better understanding of the ways in which religion gains significance in the everyday lives of the communities I studied. For instance, I noticed that it was more fruitful to think of religious identity and membership as two sides of the same coin rather than two different domains, particularly as the idea of officially joining a religious organisation - common in Finland - is usually not familiar to first-generation migrants, for whom 'membership' more often signifies a feeling of belonging rather than the act of signing up to a church registry. Similarly, the fieldwork suggested a need to differentiate between private and public practice, although by the end of the fieldwork, the two had become more intertwined due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see chapter 8).

Following Weber's advice and the theoretical and practical viewpoints discussed above, I adjusted my understanding of religion during fieldwork with focus on Finland's Russian-speaking minority. Thus, in the context of this work, I look at both the official and non-official forms of religion and explore religion as a series of four separate, albeit often interrelated actions: believing, belonging,

practising, and participating.[13] Here, believing refers to faith, belonging to both religious identity and the membership in religious organisation(s), practising to private forms of religious rituals and expression, and participating to collective practice of religion, as well as participation in both religious and non-religious events organised by religious communities. In operationalising these domains, my focus will be on how religion gains significance in the lived reality of Finland's Russian-speakers and how they themselves understand its role in their lives. The four domains, and their prevalence among the research participants, will be discussed in detail in chapter 8. The next section of this chapter will focus on religion's role in the process of acculturation.

2.4.2 The relationship between religion and acculturation

The role of religion in the processes of migration, acculturation and adaptation remains largely unaddressed and merits more attention as observed, among others, by Kogan et al. (2020) and Sam and Berry (2016). Nevertheless, there is mounting evidence suggesting that religion and religiosity can affect acculturation of migrants and other minority groups in various ways and through different domains.

Existing studies vary greatly with relation to their scale, methodology, the operationalisation of religion, and the domain(s) of acculturation studied, but several themes emerge from these studies. The first is religion's role as a mental resource and a buffer against difficulties. Acculturation can be a highly stressful process, particularly when the acculturating individuals, like Russian-speakers in Finland, experience negative stereotyping and othering in their country of residence (see chapter 7). Studies show that members of minorities often report higher levels of stress, distress, and other psychological problems compared with the majority population (Lanzara et al. 2019; Mamani et al. 2017; Ward and Geeraert 2016). The risk may be particularly heightened in the case of migrant minorities, as pre-migration, migration, and post-migration experiences have all found to include risk factors for mental health and psychological well-being (Lanzara et al. 2019).

The religious buffering hypothesis suggests that religion can act as a protective mechanism and thus promote well-being among people who find themselves in stressful situations (Hoverd and Sibley 2013; Storm 2017). Several studies have shown that religiosity can reduce the adverse effects of stress and have a beneficial impact on stress-related illnesses (Storm 2017). Previous research has also indicated that religious people on average enjoy greater personal well-being than their non-religious counterparts (Hoverd and Sibley 2013, p. 184). Moreover, religious participation has been linked with higher life satisfaction scores also among minorities (e.g. Neto 1995).

[13] The four domains that form the basis of my understanding of religion in the context of this study reflect, but do not exactly mirror, Glock's (1962) dimensions of religious commitment. However, it should be noted that Glock's ritualistic dimension is sometimes further divided into private versus public ritual (Davidson 1975, p. 85; Press and Swatos, 1998 p. 210), providing support for my decision to differentiate between practice and participation.

Several studies have charted religion's potential role as a protective factor against the negative effects of acculturative stress, such as hazardous alcohol-use (Jankowski et al. 2020). It has also been established that religion can help mediate effects of discrimination (Diehl and Koenig 2009).

Evidence of religion's role as an important psychological resource has been also uncovered in qualitative studies. In a small case study (n=5) conducted in the US, Gabriel (2019) found that Christian faith was an important coping factor for Filipino American youth, helping them establish community ties, providing a source of practical support, and facilitating transition into the mainstream culture. Moreover, regular religious practice had provided respondents with hope and a sense of self. In their study of 12 university students from diverse religious traditions, Philip et al. (2019) outlined three ways in which religion or spirituality could help counteract acculturative stress. As a psychological resource, religion and/or spirituality provided a sense of peace, encouragement, motivation, resilience, courage, perseverance, and hope as participants dealt with acculturative stress. Secondly, as a cognitive resource, it helped them deal with differences in the educational system and positively influenced an array of cognitive skills, such as concentration and ability to focus. Finally, as a social resource, religion and/or spirituality helped interviewees deal with relationship pressures, provided social support through involvement in religious communities, and helped develop a relationship with God.

In fact, religion as a social resource is the second theme emerging from the literature review. Studies show that congregations can play an important role in social adaptation, particularly in the case of recent migrants (Barthoma 2016). Often, some of the first social connections that migrants form in their new country of residence happen in the context of religion (Jackson and Passarelli 2008, p. 115). Helping minority members create connections among both the majority population and fellow minorities – sometimes conceptualised in terms of bridging and bonding capital (Putnam 2000) – is often seen as one of the main contributions that religious organisations can make to acculturation on societal as well as individual levels. The former refers to religion's potential in helping people form connections between and across groups, such as the members of the majority and minority populations, the latter to its power in creating and consolidating social relationships, solidarity and trust within (in this case the migrant and minority) communities. Putnam (2007, p. 143) has famously defined bonding social capital as 'ties to people who are like you in some important way' and bridging social capital as 'ties to people who are unlike you in some important way', describing bonding capital as exclusive and good for mobilising solidarity, and bridging social capital as inclusive and good for linkage to external assets. Some researchers further differentiate between linking social capital. In this case, bridging and binding are understood as horizontal ties, whereas linking social capital connects individuals with those in position of relative power (see Ryan et al. 2008). Notably, the same group of people can bond on the basis of certain similarities and bridge across certain differences: Putnam (2000, pp. 22-23) gives the example of a Black church as a community that bonds people of the same race and religion but bridges them across the

		Bridging	
		No/Low	Yes/High
Bonding	No/Low	Marginalisation	Assimilation
	Yes/High	Separation	Integration

Table 2.1: Bridging and bonding ties imposed over the fourfold model of acculturation strategies

class divide.

Putnam's theory and its later applications have been criticised for assuming that the difference between bridging and bonding rests on sharp ingroup and outgroup divisions, often those centred around ethnicity or religion (Wessendorf 2019, p. 23). Ryan (2011) has argued that migrants' social networks are more diverse and complex than is often assumed within the field of migration studies.

Taking this criticism on board, I would nevertheless like to propose that the idea of bridging and bonding can be useful for conceptualising the ways in which religions - and religious organisations - may support acculturation of minorities. In particular, I would like to draw attention to the similarities between bridging and bonding and the fourfold model of acculturation. As discussed above in section 2.2.3, Berry's fourfold model of acculturation posits that integration requires attachment to both the receiving society and one's heritage culture. In its focus on relationships between and across groups, the idea of bridging and bonding bears a striking similarity to integration, and could support Berry's (2021) idea that the efficacy of integration is based on it providing access to more resources than other acculturation strategies (see figure 2.1).

Understood in this way, the ideas of bridging and bonding can help emphasise that, in order to support integration of minority parishioners, religious organisations should strive not only to bolster their connections with the majority group and 'acculturate' them into the society at large, but also foster solidarity and contacts within the minority groups. This is particularly important with relation to Finland's Russian-speakers who, as will be discussed in the future chapters, often expressed regret for what they viewed as a lack of community among Russian-speakers and longed for more solidarity within this group.

When discussing religion's ability to support social connections within a minority group and with other groups in the society, it is important to consider how the parishes and other religious organisations are structured. Hoover (2014) uses the concept of shared parish to describe congregations where two or more

'cultural groups' share the use of church facilities while performing separate masses, a system that does not necessarily encourage interaction between the different groups. Whitesel (2016), in turn, has suggested a typology of five models of multicultural congregations: the multicultural alliance church that, like Hoover's shared parish, is made up of several sub-congregations but offers both separate and blended worship services, the multicultural partnership church in which the wealthier church supports or sponsors a struggling congregation, the mother-daughter church where a congregation launches a new church aimed at a certain cultural minority, the blended church that mixes different cultural practices, and the cultural assimilation church that prioritises a certain tradition or culture. None of these models is directly applicable to the Finnish context; in fact, Whitesel suggests that most multicultural churches are a blend of the first four categories (as the fifth is not in really multicultural due to its assimilationist tendencies). Nevertheless, the typology is useful for highlighting that there is not just one way for multicultural congregations to function and for emphasising that assimilation cannot be considered multiculturalism.

When examining the relationship between religion and adaptation, it is important to not ignore the practical support provided by religious organisations. Churches often engage in activities that go far beyond 'conventional worship' and are 'important institutional providers of social services' (Putnam 2000, p. 66-67). Importantly, churches and other religious communities can also reach migrants who fall outside of the reach of official integration programmes (Timonen 2014).

Another important factor to consider is the connection between religion and identity. While it is important to note that the centrality of religion in the construction of ethnic and national identities varies greatly between groups, religion is often a 'powerful source of identity formation' (Jackson and Passarelli 2008, p. 34) and can greatly affect 'how people understand themselves and others' Zuckerman (2003, p. 25). Sometimes, religion gains importance in an individual's life only during or after immigration, perhaps as an answer to a perceived threat to identity in the process of migration (Peschke 2009, p. 359). Religious traditions and ties can be an important source of self-esteem, social support and cultural continuity (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000), and it has been argued that religion is often 'one of the last features of identity to be abandoned' in the process of cultural change (Martikainen 2004, p. 73).

Most of the studies examining the relationship between religion and acculturation focus on the potential benefits that religion and religiosity can bring to the process of acculturation. Yet some studies suggest that religion may also hinder acculturation. For instance, studies have linked religiosity and religious participation of migrants to factors such as unemployment, lack of education, and gender discrimination, although it is important to note that a causal relationship or its direction have not been established (Garcia-Muñoz and Neuman 2012.) It has also been suggested that religion may support certain domains of adaptation and hinder others. For example, a review of studies conducted among minority adolescents suggested a positive relationship between religion and psychological adaptation, and either a neutral or conflicting relationship

between religion and sociocultural adaptation (Phalet et al. 2018).

I suggest that it is important to consider to what degree the potential negative effects can be explained by religion in itself and to what extent the attitudes *towards* (a certain) religion may affect the results. It seems likely that religion's role in acculturation can vary depending on what religion the acculturating individual belongs to. Steffen and Merrill (2011), for instance, have argued that membership in a religious organisations that are dominant in the receiving society relates positively to the acculturation process and to well-being. According to Peschke (2009, p. 369), whether religion 'serves as a positive or negative factor in the personal process of integration depends in part on how this religion, and religion in general, is perceived and lived in the host country'. In the Finnish context, Martikainen (2004, p. 74) has suggested that people coming from non-protestant and non-Christian backgrounds may face greater challenges than others when adapting to Finland. Cohen and Sirkeci (2011, p. 6) also mention the difficulties that migrants may face when they 'must confront a religious system that is sceptical of their native beliefs'. Based on both research on the topic and my previous fieldwork in Finland (Tuhkanen 2013), this is not a problem that Russian-speakers encounter often, or at least as frequently as discrimination based on their ethnic, national and linguistic backgrounds. In a study on employment of Russian-speakers, conducted by the Finnish Ombudsman for Minorities (2010), none of the 24 respondents reported facing discrimination because of their religion when applying for a job. For comparison, a quarter reported having been discriminated against in the same situation due to their ethnic or cultural background, a topic that I will return to in chapter 4.

2.5 Theoretical framework for this thesis

In the preceding sections, I have discussed the concepts of acculturation, identity, and religion, charted the relationship between them, and addressed their central challenges in the context of this work. In this section, I will bring these discussions together to showcase a theoretical framework from which I approach my research questions, outlined in chapter 1.

Firstly, I understand acculturation as a multifaceted, long-term process that takes place on both group and individual levels. The acculturation framework for this study is presented in figure 2.2, adapted from Berry and Sam (1997, p. 300).

My focus in this study is on the individual level of acculturation (including adaptation), while keeping in mind that it is closely related to group-level changes, whether they happen in the society of settlement, culture(s) or countries of heritage, or within the acculturating minority groups (in this case, the global Russophone diaspora and Finland's Russian-speaking minority). Importantly, I recognise that an individual may have more than one cultures of heritage, and that the receiving society also consists of several different subcultures. All of these groups and cultures are also affected by globalisation and

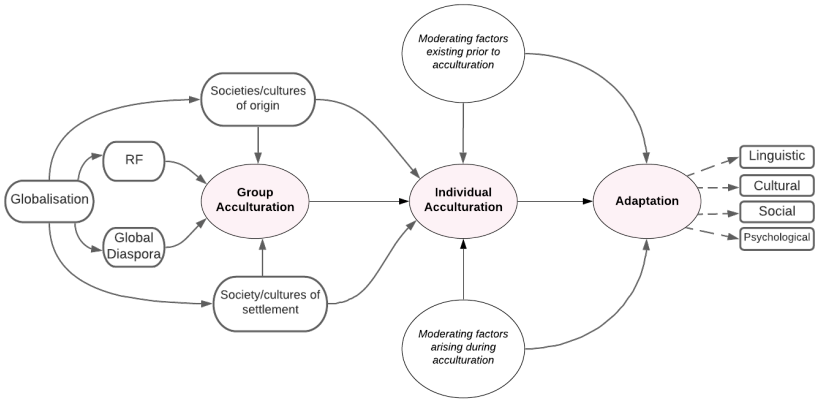

Figure 2.2: Acculturation framework for this thesis

transnationalism and, consequently, so is the process of acculturation.

In the case of Russian-speakers, I suggest that, due to the persisting connotations between Russian-speakers and Russia, Russian Federation (RF) may also be a factor affecting both group-level and individual acculturation. Regardless of whether or not Russia is one of the acculturating individual's cultures of heritage, politics and external relations of the Russian Federation often reflect on the position of Russian-speakers in different countries, including Finland (Viimaranta et al. 2018).

It is important to notice that acculturation does not happen in a vacuum. Instead, it is affected by a wealth of moderating factors, some of which exist prior to acculturation, while others arise in the course of it. The literature suggests that acculturation strategies are a particularly significant moderating factor; as discussed above, most studies now differentiate between four or five strategies (integration, separation, assimilation, marginalisation, and, in case of some models, cosmopolitanism).

Identity is another central moderating factor. The identities of an acculturating individual consist of various different construction blocks which gain salience in context. In the process of acculturation, certain types of identities - such as ethnic, national, cultural, and supranational ones - often become highlighted. In contemporary academic discussions, they are increasingly depicted as dynamic, hybrid and flexible constructs that are potentially open to change. In this sense, identities resemble the contemporary understanding of acculturation as a long-term, continuous process.

Drawing on the literature review, I propose that religion in its many forms can also be an important moderating factor, either preexisting or arising in the process of acculturation. In addition to affecting the process of acculturation, religion also has an effect on both the society of settlement - in this case, Finland - and the culture(s) of heritage, although its centrality varies from culture to

culture.

Other notable examples of moderating factors include the socioeconomic position of the acculturating individual, the social support available to her and experiences of othering, prejudice, and discrimination. In the case of immigrants, the motivations for and expectations related to migration can also be significant.

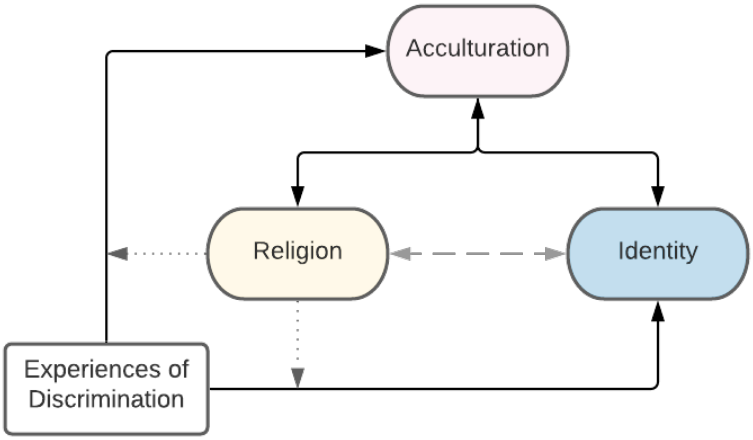

Figure 2.3: Theoretical model for the relationship between acculturation, identity, and religion

While the literature review suggests that both identity and religion are important moderating factors in the process of acculturation, they can also become altered or changed in the course of it. Therefore, there seems to be a bilateral relationship between both acculturation and identity and acculturation and religion (see figure 2.3). The picture is further complicated by the fact that the literature points to a two-way relationship also existing between religion and identity, at least in some contexts: religion is often an important part of ethnic and national identities, and these may in turn affect what religion (if any) an individual belongs to, what beliefs she holds, and how she practices or participates in her religion(s).

A wealth of other factors that moderate the processes of acculturation and adaptation may also relate to identity and religion. Perhaps the most notable among these is discrimination. Research suggests that it may directly affect both acculturation and identity construction (see chapters 4 and 7 for discussion of this in the context of Finland's Russian-speaking minority). The literature review also suggests that religion may provide a buffer against both consequences and causes of acculturative stress, including discrimination. Thus, through protecting individuals from the negative effects of discrimination, religion may also have an indirect relationship with identity and acculturation. This proposed

model for the relationship between acculturation, identity, religion and discrimination is depicted in figure 2.3, with the grey line representing the theorised context-dependent (see chapter 4) relationship between religion and identity and the dotted lines representing religion's potential to affect identity and acculturation indirectly through its effect on discrimination. More detailed models testing certain parts of these relationships will be presented and discussed in chapter 9.

The theoretical framework presented in this chapter is reflected in the structure of the thesis, discussed in more detail in section 1.5. Chapter 4 provides information on the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speakers as a group as well as the societies of origin and settlement and the global Russophone diaspora. Chapter 5 will focus on the domains of adaptation as well as factors moderating acculturation. Both my fieldwork and the literature review presented in the current chapter suggest that two of these factors - identity and religion - deserve to be examined in more depth, which will be done in chapters 6 and 7, respectively. Finally, religion's role as a factor moderating acculturation and the relationships presented in figure 2.3 will be the focus of the last two empirical chapters, chapters 8 and 9.

2.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have proposed a theoretical framework from which I approach this research as well as introduced, discussed, and critically examined the central concepts of this thesis. I have done so from a decidedly interdisciplinary angle, combining, for instance, the anthropological understanding of identities as hybrid and malleable creations with the psychological theories of their significance in the process of acculturation.

The chapter has highlighted some challenges and questions that merit more attention. These include, but are not limited to, the difficulty of capturing the diversity of the contemporary world and its various cultures and subcultures within a framework of acculturation, the role of intersectionality and multiplicative identities, and the emerging understanding that, instead of being a harmful consequence of forced exclusion, the acculturation strategy masking itself as marginalisation may in fact signal preference for individualism and the development of a supranational and -ethnic sense of belonging. Overarching all of the theoretical discussions reviewed in this chapter is the need for contextualisation. Acculturation does not happen in a vacuum, and it is of foremost importance to position the theoretical framework presented in this chapter with relation to the population that I study, the Russian-speakers living in Finland. I will do just that in chapter 4.

Moreover, the conceptual ambiguity and versatility of identity, acculturation, and religion bring about particular challenges with relation to their operationalisation. I will attempt to answer them in the next chapter, which presents my research design and methodology and discusses the practicalities of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3

Pragmatic Approach to Studying Acculturation: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Acculturation research has traditionally relied on quantitative surveys (Chirkov 2009a).[1] Despite calls for more mixed methods research into acculturation (see Berry 2009; Sam and Berry 2016) and warnings that a positivistic quantitative approach may be insufficient for understanding the complexities of the phenomenon (Chirkov 2009a), studies employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to acculturation remain rare.

My research design differs from this model in two important ways.

Firstly, it employs a pragmatic mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods in both data collection and analysis. The quantitative data used in this thesis stems from a country-wide postal survey conducted in the Spring of 2019. In collaboration with the Finnish Church Research Institute, which kindly provided funding for the survey, I sent out survey questionnaires to 1500 randomly selected adult Russian-speakers. The final, cleared quantitative data set consists of 224 observations (respondents).

The main part of the qualitative data is formed by semi-structured in-depth interviews with 26 Russian-speakers, reached through purposeful sampling with the help of existing contacts, key informants, social media, mailing lists, and

[1] At the same time, it is important to recognise the wealth and long history of qualitative studies on migrants and minorities that, while not necessarily employing the concept of acculturation, nevertheless deal with themes closely related to it (see, for instance, Kopnina's research on Russian migrants in London and Amsterdam (2002)).

religious communities. In addition to these in-depth interviews, the qualitative data consists of fieldwork notes based on participant observation and numerous informal 'field interviews', open-ended comments from the survey, and interviews with key informants.

The survey allowed me to statistically explore the relationships between acculturation, identity, and religion and reach a larger number of respondents than would have been possible by qualitative methods alone. In-depth interviews and participant observation, in turn, helped me gain a fuller picture of the lived experience of acculturation, the richness of which is difficult if not impossible to capture in a survey format. The different data can complement, but also challenge each other, shining a light on potential discrepancies and ambiguities that are often left uncovered but may help reach a deeper understanding of acculturation and the related social processes.

Secondly, I was granted the permission to use the Finnish Population Information System, a national register containing certain basic information on all of the country's residents, in recruitment of survey participants. The sample was randomly drawn from the Population Register Centre's database of all Finnish residents whose native language is registered as Russian. As such databases are not readily available in many countries, the use of truly random samples in acculturation studies is rather rare. Compared to other sampling methods, there are many benefits to using random sampling in survey research, including greater representativeness.

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the methodological framework and the different type of data at the heart of this thesis. In this chapter, I will discuss this framework, the process of data collection and analysis, my methodological choices, and the advantages and challenges related to them. I will also explore my own positionality as a researcher in the field. Before that, I will begin by introducing my research paradigm and the epistemological choices guiding the research, including pragmatism, constructivism, intersectionality, and methodological pluralism.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Pragmatism and constructivism

Research paradigms guide much of social scientific research. They can be understood as worldviews, epistemological stances or shared beliefs of a research community (Morgan 2007). Paradigms help frame research, and traditional division of paradigms often centres around ontological, epistemological, and methodological choices. However, I agree with Morgan (2007, p. 61) that our ideas of paradigms are highly influenced by human agency and that, consequently, it makes 'little sense to claim that principles such as ontology, epistemology, and methodology are actually defining characteristics' for them or to allow them to impose order 'on the practices in social science research through an externally defined, a priori system from the philosophy of knowledge'. Adopting this

viewpoint, I did not start my research design with a choice of *a* paradigm, but rather with choosing what elements of different paradigm*s* to combine into my own approach to studying acculturation. In particular, this approach incorporated elements from pragmatism, which encourages methodological pluralism, and constructivism, which highlights subjective meanings.[2]

This was, in itself, a pragmatic choice. According to Morgan (2014, p. 5) pragmatism 'presents a radical departure from age-old philosophical arguments about the nature of reality and the possibility of truth'. Instead, the focus of pragmatism is on producing useful research (Yvonne Feilzer 2010), and the paradigm is often connected to the pursuit of social justice (Kaushik and Walsh 2019). As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the most pressing issues in the study of migrants and other ethnocultural minorities is to what extent the theorising of their lives in academic discussions brings tangible benefits to the communities in focus; in short, to what extent our research benefits the people we research. This question is particularly important with relation to acculturation research, which often informs governmental guidelines and practices on minority adaptation (Rudmin 2006). By prioritising *goals* of social inquiry (Morgan 2014, p. 2), pragmatism reminds us to keep our eyes on the prize; in this case, producing research that may have an impact also outside of academia, a goal implicit (and often explicit) to much research on minority populations.[3]

As pragmatic approach redirects our attention to practical rather than metaphysical concerns, it does not exclude, but rather encourages, the incorporation of elements from other paradigms. In my case, the other important notion guiding my research is that of social constructivism/constructionism,[4] the idea that knowledge - and the social 'reality' itself - are produced through human action and interaction (Kim 2001). From a constructivist position, many of the concepts often considered natural - such as countries, nations and ethnic groups - appear as products of our culture and of human interaction (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Zuckerman 2003, pp. 21-22).

In this thesis, I adopt a constructivist approach in recognising that the meaning and significance of acculturation, identity, religion, and other concepts central to my work have been and continue to be constructed in various domains, including but not restricted to media articles, political speeches, academic writings, art, pop culture, and other instances of everyday life. I also recognise that I myself take part in this construction, through, for instance, the writing of this very text.

Declaring oneself a constructivist is, these days, often the easy and expected choice, a position reached automatically rather than a result of careful consideration (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Yet awareness of the problems and restric-

[2] See Frost et al. (2020) for an example of a study departing from a similar epistemological position.

[3] For example, acculturation research can help challenge negative stereotypes surrounding minority groups, such as Russian-speakers, and question the outdated ideas that equate acculturation with assimilation (see chapter 2).

[4] While the two concepts are often used interchangeably, they are sometimes linked to subtle metaphysical differences, discussion of which falls outside of the remit of this study.

tions related to the use of the approach is required if one is to take full advantage of its benefits. Having played an important part in challenging the once dominant positivist notions of science and thus reforming social inquiry, constructivism has now become 'the epitome of academic respectability, even orthodoxy' and, consequently, lost some of its driving force and freshness (Brubaker 2004, p. 3). It has also been accused of turning into a cliché and producing banal, meaningless and empty claims that are unhelpful for gaining a deeper, more holistic understanding of the social processes that shape our world (Schöpflin 2010; see also Epstein 1998).

And yet, as Hacking (1999) has noted, there are different shades to constructivism. In fact, Hjelm (2014, pp. 87-88) has argued that since even those who consider themselves constructivists have not reached an agreement on the exact meaning of the term, we should not speak of one constructivism but rather of *constructivisms* in plural. In this thesis, I have chosen to renounce the so-called universal constructivism, which stems from linguistic idealism and according to which 'everything is socially constructed' (Hacking 1999, p. 24). Instead, I would argue that what is created in and through discourse is *meaning* (Mole 2007), and that it can be derived 'from objects in the environment as well as from social interactions' (Kim 2001, p. 6). Read this way, and combined with pragmatism, constructivism is not at odds with survey research; like qualitative research, quantitative surveys, too, can produce knowledge on both the social constructions of meaning and on the lived realities in which they take place.

In addition - and in relation - to pragmatism and constructivism, another stance central to my research design is that of interdisciplinarity. Like pragmatism, interdisciplinarity is a problem-oriented approach (Brewer 1999, p. 327). The problems, concepts and methods that this study explores and employs are used in and influenced by several disciplines. Keeping in mind that disciplinary borders are, in themselves, a construction (and often a wobbly one at that), I find no reason for meticulously following them. Instead, I have decided to combine and integrate the theories and practices of social psychology, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies, all of which offer important insights into my research questions, throughout this thesis. Considering the contemporary popularity of interdisciplinarity, this is by no means a radical approach, but one which, I hope, will prove to be a fitting and fruitful one for the purposes of this study.

3.2.2 Methodological pluralism and mixed methods

The foundation of this thesis lies in interdisciplinary mixed methods approach. I combine different disciplines to better account for complexities of the topics and the population that I study, and the same considerations guided my choice of employing multiple methods of data collection and analysis in my research. This mixed methods approach, also known as integrative, multimethod, blended or mixed research,[5] is based on recognising the usefulness of both qualitative

[5]Again, while their closer examination falls outside of the scope of this thesis, it should be noted that some theorists have identified certain differences between these terms (see Johnson

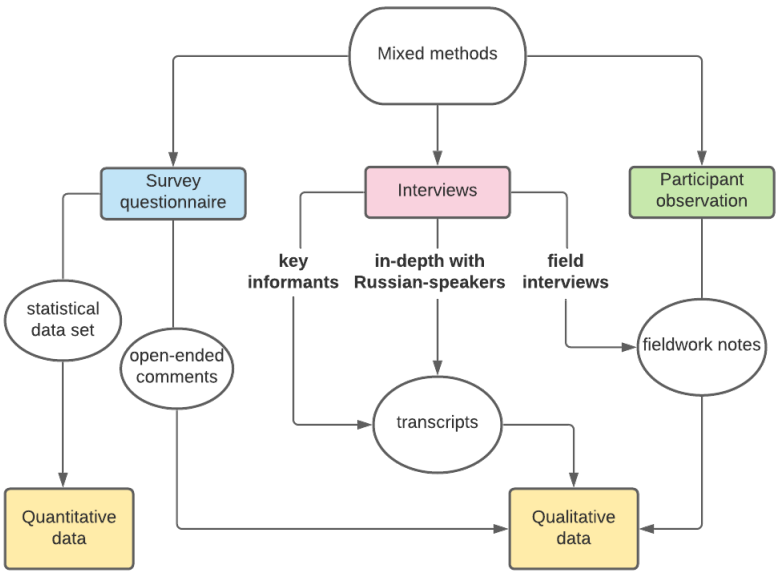

Figure 3.1: Methodological framework for this thesis

and quantitative methods and drawing on the strengths of both. In other words, it tries to find workable middle solution to research problems of interest while respecting 'fully the wisdom of both' traditional paradigms and considering 'multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints' (Johnson et al. 2007, p. 113).

World's leading acculturation scholars, Sam and Berry (2016), have called for more mixed research into acculturation. Furthermore, Berry (2009) has suggested that study of acculturation should begin with ethnographic research into the cultures present in the process of acculturation and that the development of research strategies and instruments for measuring individual-level acculturation should only be undertaken after this first step has been completed, a recommendation that I followed (see section 3.3.1). On a more general level, methodological pluralism can promote interdisciplinary collaboration and help create richer data (Johnson et al. 2007). It has also proven valuable in 'producing results that are both broad and deep' (Voas 2007, p. 148), prompting some researchers to go as far as to argue that using mixed methods 'frequently results in superior research' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, p. 14).

Others have a more sceptical view, and it is important to consider the limitations and challenges of mixed research. The most obvious of these has to do with practicalities and resources: integrative research often takes more time, comes at an elevated cost, and requires broader methodological training. De-

et al. 2007, p. 119).

spite having already employed mixed methods in my previous research among Finland's Russian-speakers (Tuhkanen 2013), I did sometimes find navigating these constraints challenging. In fact, my own use of mixed methods, at least to the extent in which I have been able to do so in this thesis, might not have been possible had I not been able to secure funding for the implementation of the postal survey.

Another challenge that I had to consider in relation to both mixed methods and interdisciplinarity more broadly had to do with theoretical concepts and their operationalisation. Most of the central concepts of this study, such as acculturation or integration, are used in one way within social psychology, another way in anthropology, and a number of third ways by my research participants. By necessity, they are also operationalised differently in survey questionnaires than in ethnographic interviews, all of which complicated the data analysis but, I would argue, also enriched it.

The use of mixed methods also brings about some epistemological and ontological questions, many of which have not yet been sufficiently addressed. Perhaps the most significant of these is the so-called incompatibility thesis, according to which quantitative and qualitative paradigms have led to two divided and distinct research cultures and philosophies that are too different to be successfully mixed. As discussed above, pragmatism seeks to move forward from such restrictions, which it often considers to be artificially imposed, attempting redirect our attention to methodological rather than metaphysical concerns (see Morgan 2014; 2007). At the same time, it has sometimes been accused of oversimplifying complex philosophical issues related to mixing elements from different paradigms. In fact, scholars choosing to employ blended research often face criticism from both qualitative and quantitative camps, which sometimes regard integrative research as 'a product of confusion about the goal of the study' (Rice et al. 1999, p. 42). Some proponents of the incompatibility thesis have even argued that attempts to bridge the gap between the paradigms are 'doomed to failure' (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003, p. 19).

This pessimism seems unwarranted in the light of the wealth of studies that successfully incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods. Moreover, it seems to exaggerate the differences between paradigms, particularly when it comes to the rather widespread ideas of incompatibility of constructivist approach and quantitative methods: as Scott (2010, p. 233) has pointed out, quantitative researchers 'are not naïve positivists' and do 'acknowledge the role of social construction in measures'. Nevertheless, some pioneers of integrative research have sought to counter the criticism by positioning the mixed methods approach as the third major paradigm, which not only combines elements from both qualitative and quantitative approaches, but occupies a distinct middle ground between them (Johnson et al. 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). While I do share the objective, voiced by many supporters of integrative research, of bridging the chasm between qualitative and quantitative research, I believe that viewing mixed methods as a major research paradigm in its own right highlights rather than diminishes the importance of untangling the challenges related to its use, a task which falls beyond the scope of this work. As

such, I have chosen to approach mixed methods as a way of gaining a more complete understanding of the phenomenon I study rather than as a backing of any claim for greater validity or objectivity (Flick 2004, p. 179). In short, I agree with the pragmatist view that different 'research approaches should be mixed in ways that offer the best opportunities for answering important research questions' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, p. 16). From a practical point of view, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods allowed me to reach a relatively large number of respondents on one hand and to zoom in onto individual experiences on the other - both of which are, I believe, necessary for answering the research questions outlined in chapter 1.

3.3 Practical considerations

3.3.1 Research process

This thesis is based on research conducted between 2016 and 2020. I began the research in 2016 with immersing myself in the field. In practice, this meant participant observation, informal conversations, and reaching out to key informants and potential interviewees. This fieldwork did not follow the conventions of traditional anthropological research: instead of living in the field for a certain, often prolonged period of time, I made shorter excursions into it over four years.

I began conducting interviews in 2017 and continued with them until the end of the fieldwork. In 2018, I created the survey questionnaire, which was influenced by the ethnographic fieldwork and the interviews that I had conducted until that point. The survey was sent out in early 2019.

In the course of the fieldwork, I made certain changes to the original research design. For instance, I had initially planned to conduct participant observation in various 'religious and secular spaces frequented by Russian-speakers' (fieldwork notes, 2016), wanting to focus on several religious communities with the aim of gaining as wide of a view as possible into the research questions posed in this thesis. However, I soon realised that, with limited resources, this broad view could come at the expense of depth and decided instead to focus the participant observation on one religious community, the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki.

It is difficult to pinpoint an exact date on which my fieldwork ended, as I continued following the field and engaging in informal 'field interviews' throughout the analysis and into the writing up stage. This was particularly useful as it allowed me to follow the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which marked the latter stages of this research (see chapter 8).

Importantly, the research design and process were also informed by my previous research among Finland's Russian-speaking minority (Tuhkanen 2013). Most notably, as mentioned in chapter 1, the 2013 study was central for the conceptualisation and framing of the current research: it was during that fieldwork that I realised that religion seemed to play an important role in the acculturation and adaptation of some Russian-speakers and that there was a gap

in the literature with regards to this topic. But my experiences in the field and feedback received from the research participants also affected other parts of the research process. For instance, a number of respondents to the survey I conducted in 2013 had pointed out that questions on experiences of discrimination would have been indispensable for gaining a proper understanding of the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speakers, a suggestion that I took on board when constructing the interview guide and the survey questionnaire for this thesis. Similarly, as several participants in the earlier study had told me they did not identify with any ethnic or national groups, I included that as an explicit option in the survey I created for the current research. I am sure that the insights I have gained while working of this thesis will be instrumental in guiding any future research projects that I may embark on.

3.3.2 Languages of fieldwork

Minorities often lead multilingual lives, switching between languages in different contexts. My study reflected this. Being a native speaker of Finnish, Russian and Estonian – the languages most commonly used by members of Finland's Russian-speaking community – enabled me to conduct in-depth interviews in languages preferred by the interviewees without the need for translators, a great benefit particularly for a research project examining potentially sensitive topics.

I usually started the interviews by asking which language my interviewees would prefer to use, unless this was clear from previous conversations. Majority of the interviews were conducted mostly in Russian, four mostly in Finnish, and two in an almost equal mix of Finnish and Russian (see Appendix 1). It should be noted, however, that most interviews included at least some mixing of the languages. During the analysis stage, I chose to work on interview transcripts in their original form, most often only translating the parts that I wanted to use in this thesis.

The survey questionnaire (see appendix 2) was created in English and then translated into Russian and Finnish. The Russian questionnaire was sent to the respondents together with a bilingual (Russian-Finnish) letter asking them to take part in my research and providing more information on the study. The respondents had the choice of filling in the Russian form sent with the letter and returning it in the prepaid envelope or requesting a Finnish- or English-language questionnaire to be sent to them (no such requests were received). They could also use their personalised code to log onto an online survey where they could choose between Russian, Finnish, and English forms, although only a small percentage of the respondents chose to make use of the latter options.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Understanding research as a vehicle for social justice (see above) - or, at the very least, as one potential tool for achieving positive societal changes - highlights the importance of centring ethical considerations. Consequently, these consider-

ations guided my research from the first stages of research design, through data collection and analysis, and all the way until the writing up stage of this thesis.

My approaches to research ethics in the course of this research could be broadly divided into two closely related categories: formal and practical.

On the formal side, I applied for and was granted ethics approval from the UCL Ethics Committee. As per the instructions received from the Committee, I applied for and received separate approvals for qualitative fieldwork and for the quantitative survey. All the data used in this thesis was collected, stored and analysed in accordance with the regulations and recommendations of the Committee. In addition to the UCL Ethics Committee, I followed the guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. I also obtained permission from the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki to conduct participant observation and interviews in their premises.

While these formal, institutional processes of approval are of great importance, and I found them helpful for planning the study, the 'procedural ethics' cannot fully prepare a researcher for all the ethical dilemmas she may face in the field (Chiumento et al. 2020; see also Mapedzahama and Dune 2017). In general, the practical ethical dilemmas I faced in the course of my research centred around three themes: the effects my research could have on participants - reflected in issues such as anonymity and confidentiality -, the representation of minorities - this thesis being one example of such representations - , and my role as a researcher, which I will discuss in some detail in section 3.7. Generally, I approached these issues with an understanding that careful considerations of ethical dilemmas is, if possible, even more important than usual when studying people belonging to ethnocultural minorities.

At the same time, automatically categorising members of linguistic or ethnocultural minorities as vulnerable can be problematic for several reasons: it is often seen as patronising, runs the risk of stereotyping, and ignores the diversity within these groups (Rogers and Lange 2013). In fact, there were notable differences between my research participants in this, as well as in other regards (see chapter 5). Luna (2009) has suggested that vulnerability should be understood in terms of intersectional layers instead of fixed labels, and this was the approach that I adopted in the context of this work. In practice, this meant that I often reconsidered ethical questions on a case-by-case basis, with the recognition that certain situations demanded a(n even) greater attention to research ethics and to issues such as anonymisation. For instance, I use pseudonyms with all research participants (with the exception of one participant who asked for their real name to be used). However, certain interviewees shared details that were particularly sensitive (for instance, telling me how their faith had helped them overcome a drug addiction) or that could make them recognisable despite the pseudonym (for instance, when discussing ethnocultural background that is notably rare in the Finnish context, as in the case of the interviewee who identified as Lithuanian and Izhorian). In these cases, I have often omitted the pseudonym from the quotes, so that, even in the (admittedly highly unlikely) case that a reader were to recognise the interviewee in question, they would not be able to connect them to other data presented in this thesis.

3.5 Data collection

The analysis in the following chapters draws on original qualitative and quantitative data that I collected during fieldwork in Finland between 2016 and 2020. As discussed above, I used several complementary data collection methods: quantitative survey, semi-structured in-depth interviews with Russian-speakers, semi-structured interviews with key informants, participant observation, fieldwork conversations, and ethnographic interviews. In this section, I will present these methods in more detail.

3.5.1 Interviews

The main part of the qualitative data for this thesis consists of in-depth interviews with 26 members of Finland's Russian-speaking community conducted between 2017 and 2019.

On average, the interview length varied between 90-120 minutes, with the shortest lasting for 50 minutes and the longest just under three hours. Some participants were interviewed more than once. Furthermore, as I continued meeting some interviewees in the course of my fieldwork, I sometimes had a chance to continue the discussions started during the interviews in a more informal manner. Often, these conversations proved just as fruitful as the original interviews. While none of these informal conversations were captured on tape, all but two of the 'official' interviews were recorded. In the two cases where interviewees felt more comfortable speaking without being recorded, extensive written notes were taken and served as the basis for the following analysis.

In addition to the in-depth interviews with Russian-speakers, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with seven current or former employees and volunteers of the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki. These interviews were recorded and ranged in length from 45 to 90 minutes. They were complemented with less formal, unrecorded discussions with employees as well as volunteers working at the parish. These interviews and conversations provided me with useful background information on the work of the parish and an interesting window into how acculturation and religious organisations' potential role in the process was understood and conceptualised within the FOC.

Interviewees

I did not set a definite aim as to how many interviews I intended to conduct. Instead, I continued with the interviews until I felt that I had reached a point of saturation. I reached the interviewees using a combination of purposive sampling and snowballing. Often, the people I had interviewed would put me in touch with their friends or acquaintances. The interviewees were also reached with the help existing contacts, key informants, social media, and mailing lists.

It goes without saying that an interview sample of 26 people, reached with a combination of purposive, snowball, and opportunistic sampling, cannot - and, importantly, does not - pretend to be representative of a community of

(more than) 85 000 people. Nevertheless, I believe the interviews succeeded in capturing the internal diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community.

To be able to examine the relationship between religion and acculturation among Russian-speakers living in Finland and reach a 'full and sophisticated understanding of all aspects of the phenomenon' (Rice et al. 1999, p. 42), the interview sample included people of various religious faiths and affiliations and those of none (see chapter 8). I also wanted to ensure that the sample reflected the diversity of the community in other ways, including age, ethnic identity (see chapter 6) and, in case of those born outside of Finland, reasons for migration.

Ten interviewees identified as Ingrian Finns or other Finnish remigrants. Two had arrived in Finland as refugees. Four interviewees had been born in Finland, and eight had moved there at some point during their childhood. Five people, all of them women, had moved to Finland due to their partner. Additionally, four interviewees who had moved as children had done so due to their mothers' marriage, and one due to her father's work. Education or employment were the main reasons of migration for five of the interviewees. One interviewee had 'old Russian' background. For those born in other countries, the length of residence in Finland at the time of the first interview ranged from two to 30 years.

Broadly in line with the gender composition of Finland's Russian-speakers, 9 of the interviewees identified as men and 17 as women. Their ages ranged from 19 to 68 years at the time of the interviews, although younger interviewees were over-represented in the sample. Most lived in Southern and Eastern Finland, although one had recently moved to Western Finland and one studied abroad at the time of the interview.

Active, semi-structured, in-depth interviewing

The interviews that I conducted could be best described as semi-structured in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews do not centre the need for standardisation of the questions or the interview procedure. On the contrary, they are largely based on the understanding of interview as a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee and the role of the former not as a passive observer but as an active co-participant. One of their strengths is that they leave space for new themes and topics to emerge in the course of the interview, making them highly suitable for addressing complex, multifaceted phenomena such as migration and acculturation. Often, interviewees would bring up or touch upon topics that were not included in the interview guide, and this 'veering off the track' provided plenty of interesting and important material.

Nevertheless, the interviews were not completely unstructured. Before the first interview, I prepared an interview topic guide outlining the central themes I was looking to discuss along with a selection of example questions. Some of these themes were discussed in all interviews (such as the experience of moving to or growing up as a Russian-speaker in Finland), others only with those to whom they applied (for instance, details of religious participation). In addition to making sure that the interviews would cover the central themes outlined in the interview guide (albeit often in a varying order, as is common with in-

depth interviewing), I nearly always ended the discussions with a set of 'landing' questions, including '*Is there anything else we haven't covered today but you find important*?'. Similarly, I tended to start with a series of 'light' topics, easing both me and the participants into the interview. However, this was not always possible; once, after the interviewee and I had barely exchanged hellos, she asked me who I was 'by nationality' ['а кто ты по национальности']. After such an opening, it would have been senseless to revert back to the interview guide or the 'easy' questions I had planned to begin with, so instead, after briefly telling her about my identity, I simply asked her: what about you?

This exchange was a good example of how interviews are produced in collaboration between the interviewee and the researcher. Interview is an active process (Gemignani 2014), and, in the 'real world', it is difficult if not impossible - and, I would argue, ultimately unnecessary - for interviewers to hide behind the mask of a neutral, dispassionate researcher. Instead, I approached the interviews as an active interviewer (see Holstein and Gubrium 1995, pp. 38-46) that 'provokes' and encourages the participants to talk about their lives through different interactional and discursive gestures. During the interview process, I noticed that these gestures can be both planned and unplanned. For instance, I would often ask the interviewees whether they agreed with something that had emerged in the previous interviews, or primed questions with references to topical news stories. Despite knowingly adopting this active stance, I was somewhat shocked when, listening back to recordings of the first interviews, I noticed how much I seemed to direct the conversation through small gestures that I had not been conscious of at the time; for instance, my tone of voice. While this initially brought up fears about 'contaminating' the data (Holstein and Gubrium 1995, p. 38), I ultimately came to see such gestures as an unavoidable part of the interview process. Moreover, I came to believe that, in qualitative research at least, it is hardly possible to avoid bias, and that attempting to 'constructively respond to the problem of subjectivity' is both more fruitful and more honest than pretending that it could be avoided altogether (Rice et al. 1999, p. 54). Parting from this understanding, I will discuss my positionality as a researcher in more detail in section 3.7.

3.5.2 Survey

Respondents

The quantitative part of my research consists of the responses to a country-wide postal survey conducted in 2019. The sample was randomly drawn from the Population Register Centre's database of Finnish residents whose native language is registered as Russian. Only people over the age of 18 were included in the sample.

The final, cleaned survey sample consists of 224 respondents. Demographic and background information on the interviewees is presented in the following figures.

Two observations are worth noting here. First is the relatively low number of

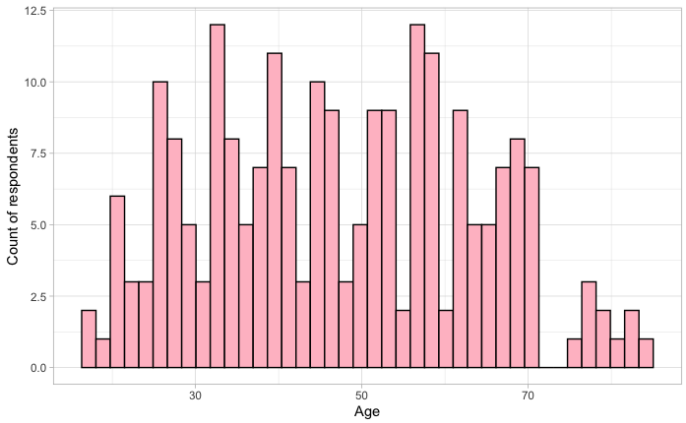

Figure 3.2: Survey respondents by age. Respondents' age varied between 18 and 85 years, with the mean of 47 years.

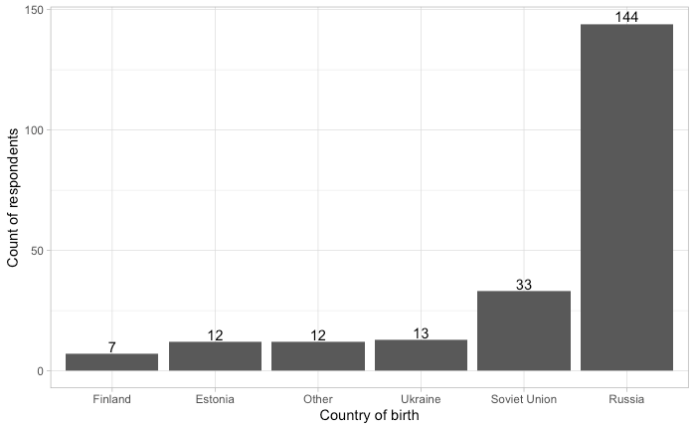

Figure 3.3: Survey respondents by country of birth

Finland-raised participants: people born in Finland and those who had moved to the country before their 16th birthday only made up around twelve percent of the quantitative sample. This may suggest that Finland-born and Finland-raised Russian-speakers may have not answered the survey as eagerly as other randomly assigned respondents.[6] An alternative explanation is that only a small number of Finland-raised Russian-speakers are officially listed as native speakers of Russian in the population statistics, which do not recognise multilingualism.

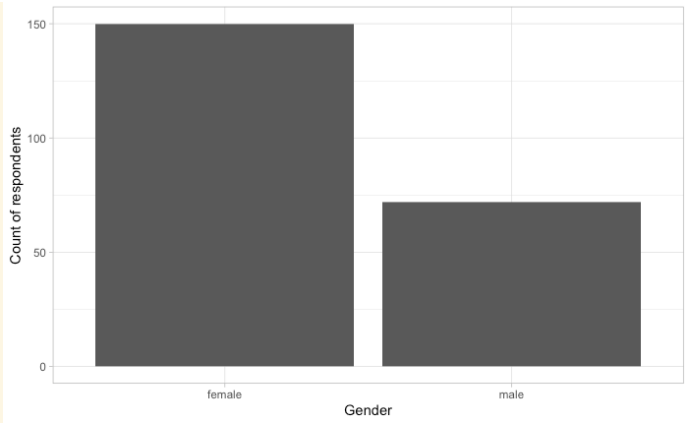

Figure 3.4: Survey respondents by gender

Secondly, 66.4 percent of the respondents identified as women and 31.9 percent as men.[7] According to official statistics, 58.6 percent of the 79 225 Russian-speakers living in Finland at the end of 2018 were women and 41.4 percent were men (OSF 2021). If we look at those over the age 20 (closer to the population that the sample was drawn from), the gender gap becomes more noticeable, with men making up 38.9 and women 61.1 percent of the population. As such, there is no big discrepancy between the sample and the population.

Survey creation

The creation of the questionnaire is perhaps the most significant part of survey research. It is also notably challenging, a matter of careful negotiation between the theoretical and methodological standpoints and practical considerations, such as available resources.

The main question guiding my work on the questionnaire was how to capture the diversity of acculturation landscapes and people's multiple and multiplicative identities in quantitative instruments. Parting from the theoretical and

[6] In fact, one respondent wrote to me saying that as he had moved to Finland when he was three years old and only speaks very little Russian, he does not consider himself a Russian-speaker and thus would not be taking part in the survey.

[7] The questionnaire also included the option 'other', but this was not chosen by any respondent. Additionally, 4 respondents did not indicate their gender.

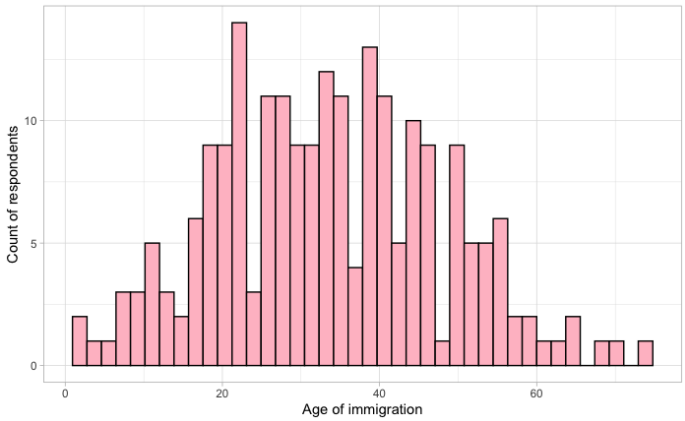

Figure 3.5: Survey respondents by age at immigration. For respondents born outside of Finland, this ranged from one to 73 years, with a mean of 34 years.

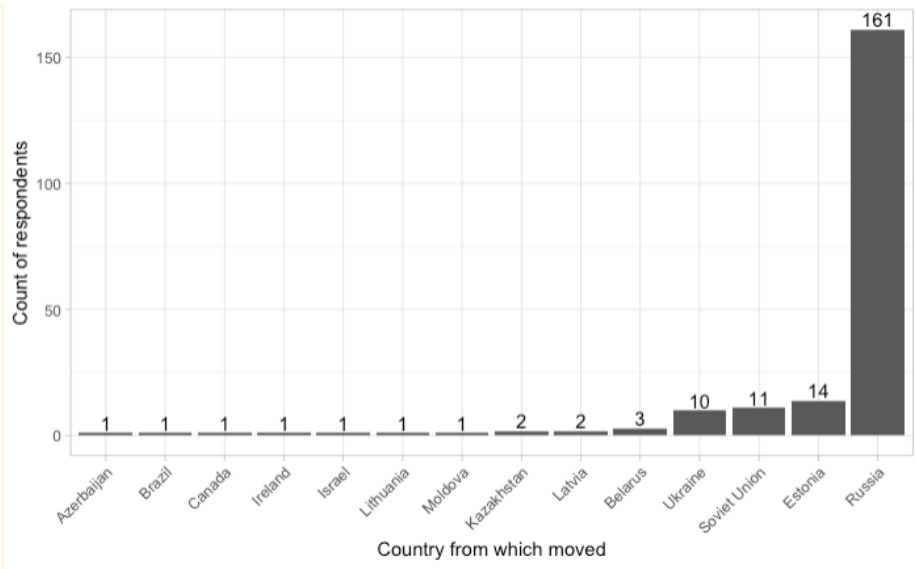

Figure 3.6: Respondents born outside of Finland by country from which they moved to Finland

empirical premises discussed in previous chapters, the survey needed to reflect the multidimensionality of adaptation and allow for hybrid, multiple and supranational identifications. This is particularly important in the case of Russian-speakers, a community with a variety of ethnic, national and cultural identities and backgrounds; operationalising their acculturation as a process that happens between the 'Russian' and 'Finnish' cultures alone would have been insufficient. At the same time, the survey had to be simple enough to be suitable for self-administration in both online and offline environments, in three different languages. Moreover, parting from a pragmatic-constructivist paradigm, I was aware that the respondents would interpret the questions in different ways, which made me particularly sensitive to the need of carefully formulating the questionnaire.[8] All of this meant that I could not rely solely on pre-existing survey instruments. In practice, the survey measures used in the study of acculturation and identity do not always reflect the theoretical developments in these fields. For instance, the possibility of identification with multiple groups, although accepted on the conceptual level, is still widely overlooked in practical research (Phinney 2003, pp. 63–64; Ward 2013, p. 397).

Consequently, the final survey consisted of three types of questions. Firstly, I used preexisting, empirically tested instruments where available and suitable, sometimes adapting them to the context of Finland and/or the Russian-speaking minority. Large part of these instruments were adapted from the Mutual Intercultural Relations In Plural Societies (MIRIPS) questionnaire which, unlike many culture-specific acculturation instruments, was designed to be used in different countries and with various ethnic groups (Berry 2017).

Secondly, I created certain measures myself based on the theoretical, methodological, and empirical premises discussed above. For example, recognising the syncretism that many scholars have argued is inherent to post-Soviet religiosity (see chapter 4), I decided to measure the prevalence of the so-called folk beliefs among the survey respondents. As I could find no existing instrument doing this, I had to construct my own. In order to do so, I first identified folk beliefs in qualitative interviews and then included a selection of the five most commonly mentioned ones in the questionnaire, asking respondents to choose whether they never, rarely, sometimes, often or always followed them.[9]

Finally, some of the questions, particularly those concerning religion, were provided by the Finnish Church Research Institute, which also provided funding for the survey. These questions had been previously used in research on religiosity of the Finnish population, allowing for the possibility of comparisons between my data and earlier countrywide surveys.

The final survey included questions on respondents' demographic informa-

[8] As pointed out by Romm (2013, p. 664), a constructivist use of questionnaires recognises that survey responses 'bear the mark of the context of interaction between "the instrument" (as interpreted by participants) and the participants'.

[9] The five beliefs chosen for the survey were 1. Knocking on wood 2. Sitting down for a moment in silence before leaving your home for travels 3. Avoiding returning home for forgotten things after you have left 4. Looking in the mirror if you have to return home to fetch something after you have left and 5. Avoiding crossing the road after a black cat.

tion, identity and identification, acculturation attitudes, life satisfaction and self-assessed health, perceived discrimination and representation, sociocultural competence, language proficiency, religion, faith and religiosity, opinions, and political participation. Additionally, space was provided for free comments.

The complete version of the survey questionnaire in English is presented in Appendix 2. However, three measures require further explanation. Firstly, I used the revised Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R) to measure identity strength (Phinney 1992). Developed by Jean Phinney in 1992 to reflect the multidimensional, dynamic and constructed nature of ethnic identity, the original measure and its shorter, revised version which I chose to use (Phinney and Ong 2007) have since been tested in different cultural environments (see for instance Ponterotto et al. 2003; Roberts et al. 1999).

Created to be used with different ethnic groups, MEIM-R does not include questions specific to particular cultures and was therefore well suited for this research. It is usually preceded by an open-ended question asking the respondent to state her ethnic identity. For reasons discussed in chapters 2 and 4, I believed that this approach was insufficient for capturing the full diversity of identifications among Finland's multiethnic and -national Russian-speaking minority, and wanted to allow respondents to choose more than one ethnic identity. Consequently, the question preceding MEIM-R listed a selection of groups that Russian-speakers in Finland most commonly identify with (as indicated by fieldwork) as well as the open-ended option 'Other, please specify' and the option 'I don't identify with any ethnic or national groups'. The structure explicitly allowed for multiple identifications ('you can choose more than one option'). MEIM-R was then administered separately for each ethnic group chosen by the respondent. For example, if a respondent indicated feeling Finnish and Russian, she would be asked to fill in both MEIM-R Finnish and MEIM-R Russian, whereas somebody who 'only' identified as a Finn would only fill in the former questionnaire. While by no means perfect - inclusion of several MEIM-R questionnaires in the survey increased its length considerably - I believe this approach to be preferable to ones that do not allow for multiple identifications.

Secondly, due to the wealth of existing acculturation measures (see for instance Kang 2006) and the disagreement within the cross-cultural psychology as to how adjustment into the receiving society should be measured (Berry 2003, p. 17), the choosing of the right instrument for the measuring acculturation attitudes proved somewhat challenging. It was further complicated by the fact that most of the available measures have been created for use with a particular ethnic group and/or within a specific society (most often USA or Canada). As the respondents in this study identify with several ethnic groups and the Finnish society differs significantly from those mentioned above, I could not use these questionnaires in my research.

In contrast, the acculturation measure of the MIRIPS questionnaire was developed to be used in different countries and with various different ethnic groups (Berry and Hou 2017). In accordance with the multidimensional nature of acculturation, the instrument measures the strength of four 'traditional' acculturation attitudes (integration, assimilation, marginalisation, separation)

separately. On the basis of the recent academic discussions about cosmopolitanism as a potential fifth strategy (see chapter 2), I complemented the MIRIPS questionnaire with questions designed to measure cosmopolitan attitudes.

Finally, I had to decide how to operationalise psychological adaptation. Many studies have measured happiness and/or life satisfaction through single item scales, such as asking respondents to rank their happiness levels from one to ten. While for instance Diener et al. (1985) have pointed out the flaws in these scales and suggested replacing them with multi-item questionnaires, Bartram (2013, p. 161) has argued that it is 'not apparent that using multi-item scales generally results in a different summary measure of happiness' and may even lower the risk of misinterpretations relating to the understanding of the specified dimensions. For this reason, and in the interest of shortening the survey, I decided to measure life satisfaction with a single question.

Practicalities and challenges

I designed the survey in English, and then translated it to Russian and Finnish.[10] One of the challenges of survey creation, particularly when translating measures into different languages, is ensuring their clarity and intelligibility. For this purpose, both the Russian and the Finnish survey questionnaires were sent out to be filled by a small group of volunteers, who reported back any problems or ambiguities in the measures or the wording of the questions. The survey was also checked by the Church Research Institute, which made further suggestions. I revised the questionnaire based on the feedback, and the edited questionnaires were once again filled in by volunteers, after which further revisions were made. The answers to these 'pilot surveys' were not included in the data set.

Notwithstanding the pilot survey, problems with two of the measures were discovered at the analysis stage. The first regards question 1.14, which was included as a control measure and asked for the yearly income of the respondents' household from all sources. The answers suggest that some respondents reported monthly rather than yearly income, while others provided non-numeric responses such as 'pension'. However, the question included a follow-up question about the respondents' feeling about their household's income (living comfortably on present income, coping on present income, finding it difficult on present income and finding it very difficult on present income), and this could be used as a control measure instead of numerical income. The upside of this latter approach is that it accounts for differences in circumstances between different households (for instance, the same total income feeling different for a single person versus a family of five).

The second problem involved the last two questions of the perceived discrimination scale (question 6.2).[11] The comments written on the margins of the questionnaire suggest that these items - 'I have been teased or insulted because of my ethnic background' and 'I have been threatened or attacked because of my ethnic background' - would have been better measured by frequency of such

[10] Standardised translations existed for certain questions.

[11] The scale was first developed as part of the ICSEY project (Berry et al. 2006).

experiences (never, once, two or three times, etc.) rather than by asking respondents to which degree they agreed or disagreed with the statements. For instance, some people who had chosen disagree or strongly disagree had included qualifiers such as 'it has only happened once or twice', 'sometimes', or 'I've had one very bad experience, but in general [I disagree]'. Moreover, for reasons that I will discuss in chapter 7, it would have been useful to differentiate between discrimination experienced in Finland and that experienced in other countries: one respondent had written 'in Russia' next to the question about having been teased or insulted because of one's ethnic background.

The comments also suggest that the perceived discrimination questionnaire could have distinguished between different domains where discrimination takes place. As one respondent wrote in the margins: 'it depends on a specific situation, for example, selling a car, real estate, etc.'. Another respondent pointed out that the survey was lacking questions about discrimination experienced in the field of employment. These comments are supported by interviews, which suggest that experiences of discrimination are particularly common in certain domains, such as school or public transport, as well as existing studies shedding light on discrimination experienced by Russian-speakers and other minorities in fields such as work and education (see ECRI 2013; Souto 2011).

Procedure and response rate

As discussed above, the survey sample was randomly selected from a pool of all adult Russian-speakers living in Finland. The sample was drawn by the Population Registry Centre. Potential respondents were approached by a two-sided letter, where one side included the call to participate in the study in Russian and the other in Finnish. Moreover, the Russian-language questionnaire was included with the letter, together with a pre-paid return envelope. Those wishing to take part in the study could also do so by logging onto the website using the personalised code they received and filling in the online survey in Russian, Finnish or English. The respondents also had the option of requesting a Finnish or English-language questionnaire to be sent to them, but no one made this request. A second letter was sent to those who had not replied to the survey within a certain time-frame.

All respondents who had returned the survey prior to a certain date were entered in a draw for one of 10 gift cards. It has been noticed that people who have a higher socioeconomic status are more likely to participate in academic studies, which affects the data and can mean that concerns of those less privileged are left unheard and, consequently, unrepresented. The purpose of the draw was to encourage these participants to take part in the study. The gift cards were acquired by the Church Research Institute and sent directly to the winners by them.

A small number of returned questionnaires had to be excluded from the sample due to being (nearly) empty or only containing written notes (which were nevertheless included with the other open-ended responses). Of the final, cleared sample, 27 were online responses and 197 postal responses. Results of the Welch

Two Sample t-test indicated that there were no significant differences between the two groups with regards to gender. There was, however, a statistically significant difference with regards to age and age at immigration: in the former case, the mean age was 34 years in the online and 49 years in the postal group ($t(39.208) = 5.6825$, $p < .001$), in the latter, 24 and 35 years, respectively ($t(29.823) = 4.1848$, $p < .001$).

The initial sample consisted of 1500 people. We expected from the start that the final sample would be considerably smaller, as postal surveys traditionally have very low response rates, as do studies focusing on ethnocultural minorities. Moreover, the survey questionnaire was very long, another factor related to lower response rate. Against this background, the final response rate of the survey (15 percent), while clearly far from ideal, can be considered satisfactory. The final sample size was large enough to allow for testing of the statistical models I had created, although a larger sample might have found connections that remained uncovered.

3.5.3 Ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation

In addition to the interviews and the survey, an important part of my research was formed by ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Southern Finland between 2016 and 2020. In practice, this fieldwork included attending events aimed at Finland's Russian-speaking minority, participating in religious services and other events organised by religious communities,[12] 'hanging out' with interviewees and other members of the Russian-speaking community, conducting informal 'field interviews', and following the public discussions on Russian-speakers in both traditional and social media.

Participant observation seeks to produce knowledge through a close look at communities. According to Kawulich (2005, no pagination), it 'is the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities'. There are different styles to participant observation depending on whether the researcher is a member of the group she studies and how much she chooses to immerse herself in its activities, as well as whether those observed are aware that they are being observed (Kawulich 2005).

With relation to this, Gold (1958) has described four separate observer-participant stances. The first is the *complete participant*, who belongs to the group she observes but conceals her role as an observer. In the second stance, *participant as observer*, the researcher belongs to the group she studies and has informed the group about the study. The third, *observer as a participant*, features a non-member researcher observing a group that is aware of her activities, while in the fourth, researcher is a *complete observer* who does not belong to the group she studies and has concealed her study from the group.

[12] Examples of the religious events I attended include the Divine Liturgy, matins and vespers, blessings of the water, Easter Vigils, processions, and church festivals, as well as informal get-togethers with parish members.

There are ethical and methodological problems relating to all four stances. For example, while concealing the study may in some questions lead to richer and deeper data, it can leave the group members feeling deceived. In my own fieldwork, I often found myself balancing between different stances. In some instances, I was an insider, in others an outsider (see section 3.7). And while I had secured permission to conduct fieldwork from the relevant authorities of the groups I was studying, and openly spoke about the research within those groups, there were certainly situations where the people surrounding me were not aware of my role as a researcher.

As part of participant observation, I conducted dozens of field interviews. As I did not record these informal conversations, any references to them in the following chapters are based on my fieldwork notes. In addition to the field interviews, the fieldwork notes analysed for this thesis consist of written entries discussing participant observation that I conducted, as well as photos I took during fieldwork.

I also kept a log of articles and news stories relating to Russian-speaking minorities in Finland and other countries. While I did not formally analyse this secondary material, I found it useful to refer to from time to time, both during the fieldwork and during the data analysis, which will be discussed in the next section.

Figure 3.7: A fieldwork photo from March 2018.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a set of approaches for analysing qualitative data with a focus on identifying themes and patterns. Instead of one method, it is best understood as a range of different thematic analyses (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 79). Importantly, in this thesis I engaged in *contextualist* thematic analysis, which combines constructivist and realist approaches in examining 'the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of "reality"' (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 81).

My choice of thematic analysis was informed by several factors, most importantly its flexibility. TA is similar to discourse analysis, interpretative phe-

Thematic Analysis	
Steps	Examples of actions
1. Familiarisation	Transcribing interviews, reading through transcripts
2. Initial coding	Identifying interesting patterns, matching codes to data extracts
3. Searching for themes	Sorting codes into themes, developing early thematic maps
4. Reviewing themes	Assessing initial themes and maps, combining and separating themes
5. Defining themes	Identifying the essence of each theme, naming themes
6. Writing up	Choosing extracts to represent the themes, making an argument

Table 3.1: The steps of thematic analysis, adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

nomenological analysis and grounded theory, but unlike these methods, it is not theoretically or epistemologically bounded (Braun and Clarke 2006; Guest et al. 2011). As it is not tied to certain ontological or epistemological positions, it is compatible with different theoretical frameworks and is consequently well-suited for pragmatic, interdisciplinary mixed methods research.

Thematic analysis is a widely used, yet rarely acknowledged analytical method (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 77). Its relative lack of recognition may relate to its accessibility, which, while facilitating the dissemination of results beyond academia - another important pragmatic concern - means that it is not as well respected as some of the other qualitative methods. Perhaps due to this, there are no specific guidelines for higher level of analysis. Consequently, TA is perceived as having limited interpretive power when not combined with an existing theoretical framework. Aware of this challenge, I sought to move away from the semantic or explicit level of thematic analysis, focusing on the latent, interpretive level; in this sense, my analysis was close to the traditions of discourse analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 84).

In practice, I followed the six steps of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke in their seminal paper (2006) and presented in table 3.1. I used both descriptive and analytical codes and engaged in both explanatory and exploratory analysis, first coding the data with my original research questions in mind, then looking at other important or reoccurring themes emerging from the data.[13] In addition the interview transcripts, I also analysed the fieldwork

[13]Note that Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 80) are critical of accounts of themes emerging or

notes and the open-ended survey responses. I used the help of qualitative data analysis software, but also engaged in more 'traditional' coding with the help of colourful markers and post-it notes.

It has to be noted that the steps are not linear, and I found myself returning to earlier stages throughout the analysis. It is also important to underline that the process of coding is subjective - the codes, themes and the story that I constructed from them are likely to differ from what another researcher would have uncovered from the same source material. Like Braun and Clarke (2019), I believe that themes are actively created and generated through an analytical process and produced at the intersection of the data, the researcher's theoretical assumptions, and her analytical resources and skills. The coding, and the analysis as a whole, necessarily reflects my own positionality as a researcher.

3.6.2 Statistical analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using R statistical software (R Core Team 2021). R is an open source programming language in which the researcher writes the analysis script herself. This facilitates the replicability of research and reduces the risk of mistakes related to researcher not controlling each of the steps of the analysis.

First, I performed a number of standard data preparation and cleaning steps, such as dealing with missing values and creating new measures based on the existing ones. As an example, I created a new variable called 'religious socialisation' based on 7 existing variables that measured whether religious upbringing, regular religious attendance, attending Sunday school, going to church for Christmas or for Easter, and reading a prayer at night or before meals had been part of respondent's childhood family. These types of combined measures were created, for example, by averaging responses to multiple questions.

After cleaning the data and conducting the measure generation steps, I explored a number of descriptive statistics of the survey population. These included statistics on religious belief, practice and participation of Finland's Russian-speakers, data which had previously not been available and will be discussed in detail in chapter 5. The statistics were described using standard quantities such as shares, means, medians, and standard deviations.

The main statistical analysis was based on structural models that I developed before looking at the data. In addition to the acculturation framework I adopted in the context of this thesis (see figure 2.2), the proposed model for the relationship between acculturation, religion, and collective identities (see figure 2.3), and other theoretical premises discussed in chapter 2, the structural models were informed by observations in the field and the (at that stage, preliminary) results of the interview analysis. For an example of such a model, please see figure 9.4.

being discovered from the data, highlighting that this discovery is an active process lead by the researcher. Here and in other instances in which I use the expression of themes emerging in the process of analysis, I do not wish to downplay my own role in excavating them from the source material.

The main statistical method used for this stage of the analysis was multiple regression. The benefit of this approach is that it allows for the estimation of the relationships between the explanatory variable and the outcome of interest while controlling for other variables. This reduces the risk that the estimate of the relationship is biased due to the influence of confounding factors. As mentioned above, the multiple regression models were built based on the structural graphs I developed before starting with the statistical data analysis. Specifically, the variables that were used in each model were determined with the help of the Dagitty software (Textor et al. 2016).[14] This workflow eliminated the risk of 'post hoc' analyses, a rather common situation where the researcher invents hypotheses after looking at the evidence, also known as p hacking (Head et al. 2015).

In addition to the main models, I also conducted exploratory analyses to generate new hypotheses for further studies. These analyses were not based on pre-specified structural models but rather on exploring apparent relationships in the data. Importantly, exploratory analyses were clearly distinguished from the main analyses and no causal claims were made based on their results.

3.7 People like you and me: the role and position of the researcher

In both participant observation and active interviewing, the role of the researcher is crucial to the success of the work. Researcher can even be understood as as one of the 'instruments' of the research process (Pyett 2003). The more my fieldwork progressed, the more central I saw my own role, identifications and actions for both the material that I collected and the analysis that I conducted on the basis of this material. This highlights the need to consider and explicitly address my own positionality as a researcher, which I will attempt to do in this chapter.

Perhaps the most instantly recognisable aspect of positionality relates to the much-debated insider/outsider division. Generally, the concept of insider is used to refer a person studying her 'own' group, while an outsider is usually conceptualised as someone who does not belong to the community he studies, most often being a member of the majority population. While in general, researchers recognise that there are advantages and disadvantages to both positions (see Kusow 2003), sometimes the former position is viewed as more emancipatory, perhaps even more credible. While important concerns have been raised about members of majority researching minorities - in fact, one of the Russian-speakers I met during fieldwork had had a negative experience in such a context - I tend to agree with Carling et al. (2014) who argue that ranking positionalities in this

[14] Here, it is important to underline that the Dagitty software does not create the structural models or generate any hypotheses on behalf of the researcher; it is a mathematical software designed to minimise bias through helping the researcher to identify the minimal sufficient adjustment sets for their models (Textor et al. 2015) and facilitate the use of causal models in empirical research (Textor et al. 2016).

way prioritises ethnocultural or national boundaries over other forms of difference and, consequently, risks reproducing essentialism, discussed in chapter 2. Returning to Crenshaw's (1991) concept of intersectionality and Wing's (2002) concept of multiplicative identities, it becomes clear that researcher's positionality in the field is about much more than the (lack of) membership in the group that she is studying.

Just as importantly, positionality is always relationally constructed. Carling et al. (2014) describe how the positionality of a Polish-born researcher who had moved to Norway at the age of three shifts more towards being an outsider and a member of the Norwegian majority when conducting research with Poles. I noticed a similar shift in my own position when interviewing recent migrants who, regardless of the country which they had moved from, often seemed to view me as 'simply' a member of the Finnish majority or at least as some sort of authority on Finland. For instance, one interviewee asked me to tell her if she was 'saying something wrong' when talking about her impressions of Finland. Similarly, when listening to the accounts of the research participants who faced discrimination on the basis of their accents or Russian names, I often noticed myself becoming more aware of my position as a native Finnish-speaker with a Finnish name. My 'insiderness' was relational and context-dependent.

As these examples show, the archetypal insider/outsider division is often insufficient for capturing the reality of the researcher's many positionalities in the field. Carling et al. (2014) list five types of 'third positions' within migration research: explicit third party, honorary insider, insider by proxy, hybrid insider-outsider, and apparent insider. As with participant observation, discussed above, here, too, I could not categorise myself using only one position during my fieldwork among Russian-speakers; perhaps the type I most readily identified with is the hybrid insider-outsider, also known as the halfie.

As defined by Abu-Lughod (1991), the term halfie describes the anthropologists 'whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage' (p. 137), who position themselves with reference to two communities and for whom 'the Other is in certain ways the self' (p. 141). I recognise myself from this description, although it is important to qualify that, by virtue of both my family background and migration history, I position myself with reference to more than two ethnocultural communities - something that, as I will show in chapter 6, I share with many of my research participants and that helped me connect with some of them.

Here, I would like to return to the important point that insiderness and outsiderness are not only about ethnocultural identifications, but also about other identities and memberships. One example of this is religion, which is incidentally another context where I sometimes found myself in the position of the halfie. Being an official member of the FOC, my own experiences and contacts within the church meant that it was relatively easy for me to conduct research in the parish. Thus, when I started my fieldwork in the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, I generally viewed my position as that of an insider. However, as the fieldwork progressed, I soon found out that here, too, there were more shades of grey.

Having grown up in a multireligious family, in school I chose to attend the mainstream Lutheran classes together with my other classmates. This lack of Orthodox education, I found out soon after commencing my fieldwork, meant that my knowledge of the intricacies of the church customs and traditions were often somewhat lacking, something I had not noticed before.

While this felt like a disadvantage at first, I soon discovered that there were also advantages to this 'incomplete' level of knowledge. While lacking when compared to those employed by or very actively involved with the church, I sometimes felt that it brought me closer to the average parishioners, who, as I will show in chapter 8, were often not only unaware of but also uninterested in many theological details. Thus, the feelings of awkwardness I sometimes experienced were mirrored in the accounts of some of my interviewees. As my research interests lie with religion as a lived experience and a sociological phenomenon rather than in theological questions, I felt that this relative lack of knowledge was not necessarily a hindrance to my work.

Geertz (1974) has described fieldwork as 'an illusion' that the researcher leaves at the end of the process, but this is not always the case for an insider. For an insider researcher (even a 'halfie' one), the real question is about separating the researcher and the individual and drawing boundaries between research and other engagement in what is, at least partly, 'her own' community. There were times when I found this boundary-drawing quite challenging. Attending a friend's bachelorette dinner, two friends sitting next to me started a discussion on their experiences as Russian-speaking kids in the Finnish elementary school. I had to resist the urge to reach for a pen and start scribbling notes on a serviette. On a train to St. Petersburg for a short city break, I overheard a woman telling the man she was travelling with about her feeling that, as a Russian, she would never be fully accepted in Finland, which made me abandon the guide book I was reading in favour of the notes app on my iPhone. At the opening ceremony of Finland's new national library, Oodi, my attention was caught by a woman who emerged from between the shelves and excitedly called to another woman: 'Mum! Look at how many books they have in Russian!'. (*Importance of libraries as places of both cultural maintenance and inclusion!!!* I typed into the notes).

There are debates within qualitative research about how much of her own background a researcher should share with her research participants and the ways in which this decision may affect the research process. However, I would like to point out that sharing in the traditional sense of the word - i.e. telling participant about one's background - is not necessary for them to make assumptions about it. For instance, simply knowing that I was a researcher at a British university, with a Finnish surname, but speaking Russian, was enough for some participants to make certain assumptions about my background. For example:

> These are all people like... you and me. People who don't fit into the realm of monoculture.

As researchers, it is important to consider to what extent these assumptions may guide the participants' choice to share or highlight certain themes. Consider, for instance, the following conversation:

> Your mum and dad are also of different nationalities, right?
>
> [interviewer:] Yes - I actually have four nationalities.
>
> Well, with my parents, I remember. My dad was very good, may he rest in peace [царство ему небесное], and mum is good, I got lucky, but still, when they would start something [a disagreement]... Dad would say: you stubborn Izhorian! And Mum would say: you Lithuanian! Always for some reason bringing up nationalities, nations [laughs]. [—] I remember it well [laughs], we had this division in our family.

Before sharing the story of her parents referring to each others' nationalities during arguments, the interviewee checked that she had correctly interpreted my own family background. Our exchange made it clear that she believed that, by virtue of also having parents of different nationalities, I would be able to understand what these nationality-focused exchanges are like for a child - but also, and perhaps more importantly, recognise that such dynamics may arise in multicultural families, even if the parents are 'very good'.

This encounter, and various others like it, make it clear that my positionality - like positionality of any researcher entering the field, whether as an insider, an outsider, or a halfie - had an effect on my fieldwork, on the data that I collected, the analysis that I conducted and, through that, on the whole of this thesis.

3.8 Conclusions

Pragmatism places importance on 'questions about why to do research in a given way' (Morgan 2014, p. 2). The methods I chose answered different parts of my research puzzles and complemented each other. Country-wide, randomly sampled survey allowed for a relatively broad view into acculturation, identity, and religiosity of Russian-speakers, in-depth interviews for delving deeper into individual experiences that are often left unheard in large-scale surveys. Participant observation and interviews with key informants provided useful background information, connected me with Russian-speaking parishioners, and allowed for an inside view on acculturation preferences and expectations of those working with minority members.

In this chapter, I have reflected upon this methodological pluralism, as well as my choice of pragmatic-constructivist paradigm. I have described and discussed my research process as a whole, including sampling, methods of data collection, thematic and statistical data analysis, methodological and ethical dilemmas I faced during the research process, and my positionality within the field.

The importance of this last point cannot be overemphasised. Little observations and remarks made it clear that the interviewees were often aware of my position - as a native Finnish-speaker, someone who comes from a multicultural family, or a PhD researcher - and sometimes tailored their accounts accordingly. Through a detailed discussion of my own role and positionality, the chapter hopes to contribute to the understanding of doing research as a

'halfie' - someone who is at once an insider and an outsider and cannot 'leave the field' in the traditional sense of this expression. The next chapter will strive to provide an overview of the 'field' in which this research is situated.

Chapter 4

Empirical background: Russian-speakers in Finland

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapters, I have developed and presented the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this research. The goal of the current chapter is to shed light on the empirical background of the study and to contextualise the theory with relation to Finland's Russian-speaking minority.

The chapter will begin with a brief overview of the global Russian-speaking diaspora, touching upon the crisis of identity caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the role of religion in the post-Soviet societies. It will then focus on Russian-speakers in Finland, highlighting their internal heterogeneity and diverse histories. I will discuss the different subgroups into which the Russian-speaking minority is often divided - old Russians, Ingrian Finnish remigrants, and first-generation migrants - and propose that researchers should better account for a fourth group, that of Finland-raised Russian-speakers, while also highlighting that these divisions are somewhat arbitrary and the borders between the different subgroups often become blurred.

After this, I will briefly discuss the official integration policies and the attitudes of the majority population towards Russian-speakers in Finland; as highlighted in chapter 2, the context of reception is one of the most important factors in the process of acculturation. I will also present the religious landscape of Finland, where majority of the population belong to the Lutheran church and where the Finnish Orthodox church also has a special position. To conclude, I will review a selection of studies conducted among Finland's Russian-speakers, with focus on identity, acculturation, and religion.

4.2 The Russian-speaking diaspora

The fall of the Soviet Union left some 36 million Russian-speakers, including up to 25 million of so-called ethnic Russians, outside of Russia in the former Soviet republics (Pavlenko 2006, p. 83; Zevelev 2001). In addition to Belarus and Ukraine, where a large part of the population speak Russian as their first language, the largest Russian-speaking minorities in percentage terms are found in Kazakhstan, Latvia and Estonia, ranging from a quarter to a third of the total population (Shenshin 2008, p. 46).[1] The are also notable Russian-speaking communities in countries that were not part of the Soviet Union, including several million in the United States, circa three million in Germany and over one million in Israel (Elias and Shoren-Zeltser 2006, p. 72; Ryazantsev 2015, pp. 157-158). In total, the size of the global Russian-speaking diaspora is estimated to exceed 25 million people (Ryazantsev 2015, p. 155).

Here, it has to be noted that the question of whether Russian-speakers can be considered a diaspora, at least in the traditional sense of the word, is a disputed one (Pavlenko 2006; Kosmarskaya 2011, 2005). This is partly due to terminological reasons. Diasporas are sometimes defined as communities far-removed from their homeland (Kolstø 1996, p. 612), whereas a large part of Russian-speakers outside of Russia live in the so-called 'near abroad', countries bordering the Russian Federation. Moreover, the very idea of one homeland is contested with relation to Russian(-speaker)s; historically, Russian has been spoken in many areas that fall outside of the borders of modern-day Russia, and many people who identify as Russians or Russian-speakers do not wish to identify with the Russian state. On the other hand, many do maintain close relations with both Russia and Russophone communities in other countries (see chapter 6). Furthermore, while the word diaspora was initially coined to portray the experiences of Jewish, Armenian, Greek, and other 'classical' diasporas, it has since been employed with relation to various different communities, including linguistic and virtual ones, and can, I argue, also be used to refer to Russian-speakers (Elias and Shoren-Zeltser 2006; Zevelev 2001, p. 3-5; Mole 2021, p. pp. 59-61).

The other reason for resisting the use of diaspora is more political. Kosmarskaya (2011), for instance, has argued that the diasporisation of the academic and public debates on Russian-speakers following the breakup of the Soviet Union is one of the many manifestations of groupism, leading to prioritisation, naturalisation and essentialisation of ethnic boundaries (see also Brubaker 2004). She calls for differentiation between diaspora as a top-down political project and a diaspora as a 'state of mind and soul' (Kosmarskaya 2011, p. 62). I prefer to employ the word in the latter sense, understanding

[1] It should be noted that the numbers of 'Russians' and Russian-speakers in different countries may not be directly comparable, as some countries collect information on ethnic background while others (such as Finland) do not. It should also be noted that ethnicity figures cannot be used as a proxy for native language. For instance, in 2020, 24.7 percent of the Latvian population were categorised as Russian by ethnicity (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia 2020), but Russian is also the native language for many people categorised as members of other ethnic groups.

the Russophone diaspora not as a community of people related to the Russian state, but as a community of Russian-speakers around the world, who often feel a sense of commonality, even solidarity, with Russian-speakers in other countries and regions (see chapter 6).

In any case, it is clear that Russian-speakers in different countries have very diverse backgrounds and find themselves in rather different situations. For example, the majority of native speakers of Russian in Germany and Israel are so-called 'co-ethnics' or 're-migrants'.[2] For the most part, they have arrived in their countries of residence after the fall of the Soviet Union and often enjoy certain benefits, such as a simplified migration process, over 'regular' migrants to these countries. In practice, however, a comparison of different co-ethnic (re-)migrations in different regions shows that these communities have often received 'ambivalent reception' in their presumed ethnic homes and that 'the "ethnic/national privilege" - which defined in important ways these migrations at their origin - disappeared once the immigrants settle in their putative homelands' (Čapo Žmegač 2010, p. 13). As I will discuss later in this chapter, this has also been the case for Ingrian Finnish re-migrants in Finland.

In most post-Soviet societies, by contrast, native Russian-speakers became a minority almost overnight, having to go through the sudden and often unexpected transition from living in 'their country' to living abroad without physically moving anywhere. Their situation is poignantly described by Laitin (1995b, p. 283):

> They are part of a new diaspora, an unexpected diaspora, a diaspora that was formed not through the movement of peoples but through the Frankenstein-like omnipotence of Soviet internal boundaries. Although called a "diaspora", we are not here talking of a standard diasporic identity, for [most of them] are already in their homeland, and there is no "there" that forms an ideal place of "return".

For many, this seismic change led to a large-scale crisis of identity, particularly where the restored states decided to construct their national consciousness in opposition to Russia, and, in the process, assign to Russian-speakers the role of the Others. For some, this stamp of otherness had serious consequences, such as becoming stateless, not meeting the citizenship requirements of their home countries but having lost their Soviet citizenship. For instance, some 730 000 or 29 percent of residents of Latvia were stateless in 1995, and today, the figure of non-citizens remains at 197 888 people, or 10.4 percent of the total population (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2020). (Kolstø 1996; Laitin 1998; Pavlenko 2006.)

While for the people caught in the middle of it, the collapse of the Soviet Union was a life-changing and sometimes traumatic experience, for scholars interested in issues of belonging, it offered unique conditions in which to observe the construction and reconstruction of ethnic and national identities.

[2]For discussion on the ambiguities and problems related to these labels, including the risk of essentialising ethnic belonging, see Čapo Žmegač et al. (2010).

One identity that emerged early on in the non-Russian post-Soviet space was a 'Russian-speaking nationality' encompassing all Russian-speakers regardless of their ethnic background (Laitin 1995a). Instead of *a* nationality, it might be more correct to speak of nationalit*ies*, as both the process of construction and the outcomes of this new identity were distinct in each post-Soviet state. This is not surprising considering the differences between these countries: in some of them, such as Ukraine, Russian(-speaker)s had been present for centuries, while others, such as Estonia, only experienced significant Russian-speaking migration during the Soviet occupation (Laitin 1995a, p. 286-288). Additionally, there was and still is considerable variance between the post-Soviet states when it comes to the position of Russian language as well as the official and unofficial policies and attitudes towards Russian-speakers. For instance, while a recent study found that 17 percent of (what the authors defined as) Russian respondents in Estonia had experienced discrimination 'because of their ethnic Russian background' in the 12 months preceding the survey, the same numbers for Latvia and Lithuania were 5 and 4 percent, respectively (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2010, p. 176).

The new nationalities were not just different in each post-Soviet state - they could also be distinguished from the identities being formed at the same time in Russia. According to Laitin (1995b, p. 284), and interestingly for the topic of this research, one factor separating the Russian-speaking identities from the Russian ones was their secular foundation: '[F]or members of the Russian-speaking nationality (and distinguishing them from those who have adopted a "Russian" nationality), neither religious membership nor Orthodox practices can be elements constituting their national consciousness'.

Laitin's observations were made in the early post-Soviet days, and Russian-speakers' attitudes towards both national identity and religion are likely to have changed in the years since. The centrality of religion has certainly increased in many post-Communist societies. For instance, in 1991, 68 percent of Russians did not identify themselves with any religion; in 2008, this number had fallen to 18 percent. In the same time, the number of those who identified as Orthodox rose from 31 to 72 percent (Simons and Westerlund 2016a, p. 3.).

This post-Soviet religious revival is not always mirrored by an increase in church attendance. Often, it can be a symbol of Russian (Ukrainian, Georgian...) heritage, a tool of nation-building, 'an explosion of religious identity, but without corresponding religious knowledge and practising of the faith' (Simons and Westerlund 2016a, p. 5). It has been argued that the Russian Federation has operationalised religion in general and Orthodoxy in particular to support national unity and gain political legitimacy, not just in Russia but also among the Russian-speaking diaspora (Agadjanian 2017; Laitin 1998, p. 311; Tolz 1998). At the same time, the relationship between Russianness and Orthodoxy, despite having been interrupted by the Soviet Union, goes back to Kievan Rus and is strong enough to have prompted Fyodor Dostoevsky to famously write that 'he who is not Orthodox cannot be Russian' (cited in Laitin 1998, p. 305).

Another notable feature of the post-Soviet religion, particularly in Russia, is

its eclecticity and syncretism: Christian beliefs and practices often coexist with folk traditions and other non-Christians notions. According to Kääriäinen (2009, p. 59), for 'the majority of Russians, the world view is composed of numerous partially contradictory elements: people believe in God, in astrology, in the transmigration of souls and in magic and numerous traditional Russian folk beliefs.' The data I collected suggests that some forms of religious syncretism are prevalent also among Russian-speakers in Finland; I will return to this topic in chapter 8.

Expressions of syncretism are not, in general, sanctioned by the Russian Orthodox Church or other religious organisations. However, it is unclear how much influence religious organisations, even those in position of power, have over the beliefs and practices of citizens in the contemporary (post-Soviet) world. As Khroul (2016) has pointed out, Russians often separate between Orthodoxy as religion and the ROC as religious organisation, with attitudes towards the former notably more positive than those towards the latter. Again, the difference in attitudes towards faith on one hand and organised religion on the other hand was clearly reflected in my data, with many research participants voicing critical opinions and suspicions not only with relation to the ROC, but to organised religion in general. This further highlights the importance, discussed in chapter 2, of differentiating between the official and unofficial forms of religion.

4.3 Russian-speakers in Finland: a growing and diverse minority

Russian-speakers are the largest of the so-called 'immigrant minorities' in Finland, and Russian is the third most widely spoken native language in the country.[3] According to official statistics, there were 84 190 Russian-speakers living in Finland at the end of 2020, amounting to 1.5 percent of the total population (OSF 2021). However, the real number is likely to be higher, as the Finnish censuses only recognise monolingualism, and Russian thus goes under-reported in many bi- and multilingual families.

Around 60 percent of Finland's Russian-speakers are women, and twenty percent are children and young people under the age of 18. Geographically, nearly half are based in the Uusimaa region, which includes the Finnish capital, Helsinki. There are also notable concentrations of Russian-speakers around other big cities, as well as in the Kymenlaakso and Southern Karelia regions of Eastern Finland. (OSF 2016.)

In the past 30 years, the number of native Russian-speakers in Finland has increased twentyfold, from 3 884 in 1990 to the nearly 85 000 in early 2021 (see figure 4.1). The number continues to grow steadily: in the 12 months leading up to February 2021, 3 309 citizens of Russia applied for their first residence permit in Finland. Additionally, the same application was submitted by 2 993

[3] Finnish and Swedish, Finland's two official languages, are spoken by some 87 and 5 percent of the population, respectively (OSF 2021).

citizens of Ukraine and 193 citizens of Belarus, many of whom are also likely to speak Russian as (one of) their native language(s). Russian-speakers from EU countries, such as Estonia and Latvia, can usually move to Finland without applying for a residence permit. It has been estimated that Russian may in the next decades overtake Swedish as the second-largest native language in Finland. (Finnish Immigration Service 2021.)

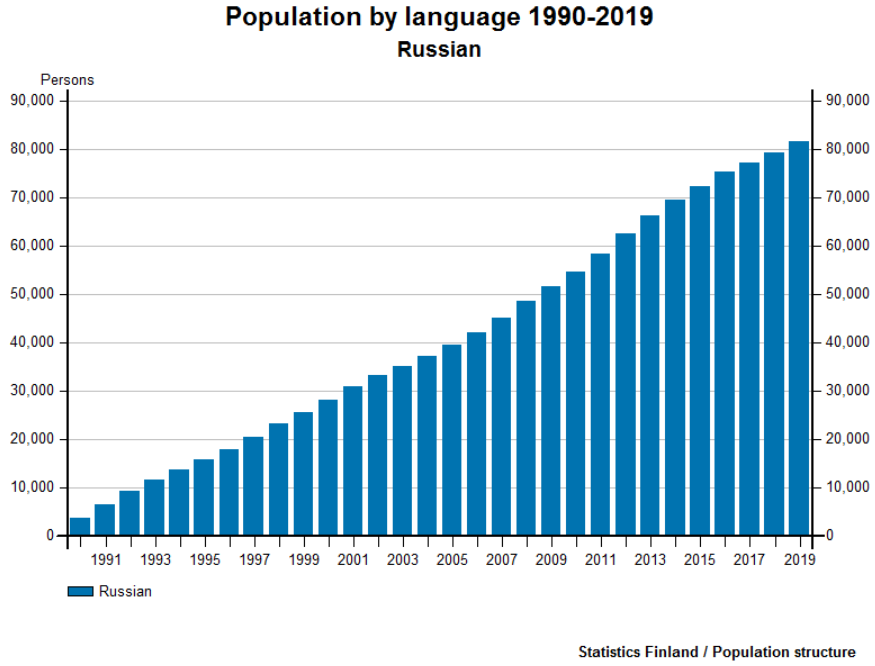

Figure 4.1: The number of Russian-speakers in Finland between 1990-2019. Reproduced from OSF (2021).

Language is not the only category used to estimate the size of different minority groups in Finland. While the official population registry does not collect information on ethnicity, it does include statistics on citizenship, country of birth and, since 2012, the country of background. The latter is determined on the basis of the birth country of parents, with all residents with at least one Finland-born parent considered to be of Finnish background[4]. At the end of 2019, 28 528 residents of Finland had Russian citizenship, while in 2020 the total number of Finnish-Russian dual citizens was 34 890 (OSF 2021). When it comes to the country of birth, 15 666 people were registered as having been born in Russia and 58 093 in the former Soviet Union, while the background

[4]In cases where both parents have been born abroad but in different countries, the mother's place of birth is generally marked as the person's country of background.

country was marked as Russia for 8 947 and as the former Soviet Union for 79 100 permanent residents (OSF 2021). Notably, the sum of the last two figures, despite excluding children of Finland-born parents, is higher than the official number of Russian-speakers.[5]

While these figures are useful for emphasising that the true size of Finland's Russian-speaking minority may be considerably larger than implied by the official statistics, it has to be noted that Russian citizenship or 'background' alone are insufficient measures of the size of the Russian-speaking community, which also includes Finland-born Russian-speakers as well as Russian-speaking migrants from other countries. In fact, the country's Russian-speaking community is remarkably diverse: in contemporary Finland, Russian language connects people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds and is often of notable practical, cultural and symbolic importance also for those native speakers who do not identify as (ethnic) Russians (Protassova and Tuhkanen 2003).

This is in part a consequence of Russia's long history as a multiethnic, -cultural and -religious state: for instance, in 1857 only 46% of the inhabitants of the Russian Empire were classified as 'ethnically Russian' (Kappeler 2009, p. 59). In this context, the shared Russian language gained particular significance, further reinforced when it was established as the lingua franca of the Soviet Union (Tolz 2001).

Another reason for the diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community lies in Finland's history: while the country was part of the Russian Empire from 1809 until 1917, it was never a part of the Soviet Union. In academic literature, a division is often made between the so-called 'old Russians', whose ancestors have lived in Finland for generations and who are often recognised as a national minority, and other Russian-speakers, who do not have such a recognition (Davydova-Minguet et al. 2016, p. 12). Within the latter group, further divisions are often made between two sub-groups. The first consists of remigrants with a Finnish background, the majority being the so-called Ingrian Finns, descendants of the 17th-19th century Finnish settlers to Ingria. The second sub-group is formed of migrants, both 'ethnic Russians' and people who do not necessarily think of themselves as Russians but speak Russian as their native language.

While this is often missed in both public and academic discussions on Russian-speakers in Finland, I propose that it is important to recognise a fourth sub-group: that of Russian-speakers born and/or raised in Finland, including both children of mixed marriages and the children and grandchildren of migrants and remigrants. As I will show in chapter 5, their acculturation landscapes often differ greatly from those of the first-generation migrants and, while they are sometimes called second-generation migrants, many reject this term and the stamp of 'otherness' that arguably comes with it.

There is little information available on the relationship between different

[5]It should also be noted that the figures for the former Soviet Union do not generally include those born in Estonia during the Soviet occupation, whose background country is marked as Estonia: there were 50 185 such people living in Finland at the end of 2019, and it can be assumed that a sizeable minority of them are native Russian-speakers.

sub-groups and/or generations of Russian-speakers in the Finnish context (I will discuss the findings that emerged from my data in relation with this question in chapter 6). In any case, it has to be pointed out that the boundaries between the above-mentioned 'categories of analysis' are blurred and overlapping. One of the people I interviewed during my previous fieldwork in Finland (Tuhkanen 2013) noted that her father is an Ingrian Finn, her mother an ethnic Russian, and the family's move to Finland was influenced by reasons related to employment. Keeping this in mind, I will next briefly discuss the above-mentioned sub-groups, providing detail insofar as it is relevant for the understanding of the topics and themes that will be discussed in the future chapters.

Figure 4.2: The Statue of Emperor Alexander II on the Senate Square in central Helsinki, April 2018. Both the square and the Helsinki Cathedral, visible in the background, were built when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Empire. Alexander II is often credited with strengthening the Finnish autonomy.

4.3.1 The old Russians

Russians and Russian-speakers have lived in the area of modern-day Finland for centuries. However, the term old Russians is today used mainly with reference to people whose ancestors moved to the country either between 1809 and 1917, when Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian Empire, or as refugees soon after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. It is hard if not impossible to assess the current size of Finland's 'old Russian' minority, but it is estimated to consist of no more than 5000 people (Nousiainen 2016).

During the czarist rule, the permanent Russian-speaking residents of Finland were mainly merchants, tradesmen, manufacturers, civil servants, clergymen and teachers. At some point, over half of the taxes in the city of Helsinki were paid by Russian merchants (Leisiö 2001, p. 22). Many 'old Russian families' were highly successful and enjoyed an elevated social status, partly due to the fact that until 1891, only Finnish citizens and noble non-citizens were allowed to own property and practice trade in the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland (ibid.). Perhaps the most famous of these families are the Sinebrychoffs, founders of a brewery that is to this day one of the most popular and successful ones in the country. (Shenshin 2008.)

In addition to the permanent residents, the number of Russian army personnel stationed in Finland usually varied between 12 000 and 50 000 men, peaking at 125 000 in 1917. Discharged soldiers were only granted the right to remain in Finland after their service in 1858. Out of those who did, many belonged to the Jewish and Tatar populations. Finland was also a popular tourist destination for many Russians, including the family of Tsar Nicholas II. It is estimated that the number of Russian summer residents on the Karelian Isthmus was at one point as high as 100 000. It included many writers and artists, such as the famous painter Ilya Repin. (Leisiö 2001.)

Some of those who owned property on the Isthmus remained in Finland after it gained independence in 1917. In the aftermath of the revolution, the country also received thousands of new refugees, their numbers reaching 33 500 in 1922. For many, however, Finland was just a short stop on their way to Western Europe. (Haimila 1998; Leisiö 2001.)

After independence, the general attitude towards Russia and Russians, having already tensed up during the short but severely opposed period of Russification during the last years of the Romanov rule, turned sharply negative. The (fear of) discrimination led many Russian-speakers to hiding their Russian heritage and even to changing their names. In some families, Russian roots became a source of shame, sometimes kept a secret even from the children and grandchildren (Shenshin 2008, p. 37).

Despite this strong ambient pressure for assimilation, some families managed to preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage. Helsinki and Vyborg were centers of Russian cultural and social activities. The work of some of the old Russian associations continued, and new ones, such as the *Special Committee for Russians' Affairs in Finland*, were set up.[6] Russian-speakers also formed

[6]However, many Russian-speaking organisations were dissolved after the Second World

charities, asylums, an orphanage and an old people's home to support fellow emigrants in need. (Leisiö 2001; Nevalainen 1999.)

For many old Russians, Orthodox religion became 'an effective vehicle of social consolidation' (Leisiö 2001, p. 29) and 'a strong identity-building factor' (ibid., p. 39). Churches had an important role not only as places of worship, but also as centres of social and cultural activities. For refugees, the existing Orthodox community in Finland offered support and a sense of community that helped them come to terms with the crisis that they had endured (Shenshin 2008, p. 35, 53). For their part, the old Russians played an important role in the Orthodox life in Finland, and many remain active members of the church to this day. For instance, in 2015 representatives of several old Russian families appealed to the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki for continuation of regular religious services in Church Slavonic (Sirviö 2015).

Considering their long, intergenerational history of acculturation and the assimilationist tendencies present in most societies, it is not surprising that many old Russians have assimilated into the Finnish society. For the few old Russians I met during the fieldwork, the main challenge of acculturation seemed to revolve around the maintenance of Russian language and culture, as well as the preservation of the emigrant history - an endeavour in which the Orthodox church continues to play an important role (see section 9.4).

4.3.2 Ingrian Finnish remigrants

Until recently, Ingrian Finns were the single largest sub-group among Finland's Russian-speaking residents; in the early 2000s, almost half of all Russian-speakers in Finland were Ingrian or other 'ethnic Finns' (Shenshin 2008, p. 9). They are of special interest to this study not only because of their relatively large size, but also due to the returnee status which, at least in theory, sets them apart from 'the rest' of Russian-speakers.[7] In practice, however, this 'special position' is highly contested and, as will be discussed in more detail below, the Finnishness of the Ingrian Finns often goes unrecognised. To better understand the historical and social circumstances leading to this situation, a short overview of the Ingrian Finnish history is required.

History of the Ingrian Finns can be traced back to the 17th-18th centuries, when the Swedish monarchs, ruling over Finland at the time, ordered peasants from Central and Eastern Finland to populate the Ingrian borderland - situated in what is now known as the Leningrad Oblast of Russia - in order to strengthen the Swedish and Lutheran identities of the disputed region. After several border conflicts, Ingria and its residents became part of the Russian Empire, followed in 1809 by (the rest of) Finland. The czarist rule ensured a relatively long period of calm and prosperity for the Finnish residents of Ingria, with active Finnish language schools, newspapers, and congregations. Importantly for the topic of this study, a majority of Ingrian Finns belonged to the Lutheran church, and

War.

[7] It should however be noted that not all Ingrian Finnish remigrants speak Russian as their native language.

religion could be described as one of their central identity markers, setting them apart from their mostly Orthodox Russian and Izhori neighbours (Prindiville 2015).

Under the Communist rule, the situation of the Ingrian Finnish minority rapidly changed for worse, with forced collectivisation, Stalin's mass deportations of Ingrian Finns to other parts of the Soviet Union and, later, the Nazi occupation of Ingria. During the World War II Finland, in desperate need of workforce, invited Ingrian Finns to 'return to the homeland', appealing to their Finnishness and to the needs of their fatherland. Some 63 000 people accepted this invitation. However, after the peace treaty of 1944, the Soviet Union demanded the 'repatriation' of its citizens. In what is now regarded by some as a betrayal leading to *kunniavelka*, a debt of honour,[8] Finland deported 55 000 Ingrian Finns - including children and war veterans - to the Soviet Union, where many were condemned to capital punishment, imprisoned, or sent to labour camps. Those who survived were for several years prevented from moving back to Ingria. Many consequently settled in Estonia and Karelia, relatively close to both Ingria and the Finnish border. (Shenshin 2008; Nevalainen and Sihvo 1991.)

In April 1990, the Finnish president Mauno Koivisto gave a televised interview in which he addressed the situation of Ingrian Finns and stated his belief that they are Finnish (Prindiville and Hjelm 2018). The interview was followed by the implementation of the so-called Right to Return policy, under which Ingrian Finns could apply for repatriate status, enabling them and their descendants to return to their 'historical homeland'. It is estimated that some 35 000 Ingrian Finns and their family members made use of the opportunity before the scheme officially closed in July 2016 (Maahanmuuttovirasto 2016).

Historical accounts are interpretations that construct history while retelling it (see Bauman 1996). The public narratives of Ingrian Finns have tended to present their story either as a heroic, unbroken continuum of Finnishness or as a tragic contamination and loss of pure Finnish identity. In the Soviet Union, the Finnish language was disadvantaged both with relation to Russian and to other titular languages (e.g. Pavlenko 2006, p. 83), which lead to language loss among many Ingrian Finns. This, together with high levels of intermarriage, meant that the Finnish identities of the remigrants were largely based on non-linguistic factors (Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind 1998, p. 210-211). Under the Right to Return policy (which was amended several times), the potential remigrants had to prove their Finnish heritage by attending formal interviews and producing official Soviet documentation categorising them, one of their parents or at least two of their grandparents as ethnic Finns (see Heikkinen 2000).[9] Yet this was not enough to convince everyone of their Finnishness, which is often questioned

[8] It should be noted that the concept and the standing of the debt of honour are often contested (see Jormanainen 2015). For instance, in 2002 senior politician and member of the Finnish Parliament Liisa Jaakonsaari said that the debt Finland owed to Ingrian Finns had already been paid and called for closing of the remigration programme.

[9] A typical remigration process could last nearly a decade (Yijälä and Jasinskaja-Lahti 2010, p. 501).

and denied in public discussions (Prindiville and Hjelm 2018).

Notably, some interviews I conducted suggest that the use of the word Ingrian may in itself represent a denial of Finnishness. It is often perceived as a notion ascribed from above, as one interviewee explained:

> If I'm honest, I didn't know at all who the Ingrians are. We were Finns. We were in the Soviet Union, I had 'Finnish' written in my passport, because both my mum and my dad are Finns. I was born in Karelia, we had passports in two languages, in Finnish and in Russian. We were Finns, we were not Ingrians, and then when we arrived here it suddenly turned out that we are Ingrian.

(Ingrian) Finns are not the only post-Soviet minority facing this problem of recognition. Similar experiences have been reported, for instance, with relation to Russian-speaking migrants in Israel, who were perceived and treated as Jewish in the Soviet Union and as Russians or Soviets in Israel (Borschel-Dan Borschel-Dan). Reflecting the assimilationism denounced by Hall (2009) in chapter 2, these discourses serve as a good example of nation-states' aspirations to get rid of cultural ambiguity (Appadurai 1998). I will discuss some of their consequences in chapter 7.

4.3.3 First-generation migrants

In addition to the old Russians and the Ingrian Finnish remigrants, most of Finland's other Russian-speaking residents are categorised as either first- or second-generation migrants. With the discontinuation of the Ingrian Finnish remigration programme in 2016, their share is likely to continue increasing.

Family-related reasons, study, and employment are the most common reasons for migration to Finland among Russian-speakers. Out of the 3191 first residence permits granted to citizens of Russia in the 12 months leading up to February 2021, 1216 were granted on the basis of family ties, for 975 study, 952 for work, and only 48 for other reasons (Finnish Immigration Service 2021). In the same time period, 118 citizens of Russia were granted asylum or subsidiary protection status in Finland.[10]

For reasons discussed above, these numbers alone do not give a full picture of the immigration of all Russian-speakers; yet they provide a useful overview

[10]I would argue that the pool of those who feel they were, to a greater or a lesser extent, forced to leave their previous country of residence is larger than that of those who officially hold the status of a refugee or an asylum seeker. The uncertainty surrounding the complicated asylum process means that it is often easier for those who possess the necessary resources to arrive in Finland via another route, such as on a student visa. I first became aware of this discrepancy in 2013, when an interviewee in a same-sex relationship told me that, while she had officially arrived in Finland as a student, in reality she and her partner had made the move because they 'wanted to be together freely'. In 2019, less than a quarter of asylum applications by citizens of the Russian Federation were approved by the Finnish authorities (Finnish Immigration Service 2021). In an interview with the Finnish public broadcaster YLE, the Chief Inspector of the Finnish Immigration Service estimated that in the previous years around one third of Russian asylum applications had come in from Jehovah's Witnesses and that around 90 percent of these had so far been declined (Äijö 2019).

into the reasons behind migration, which may in part affect the processes of acculturation (see chapter 5). While little research has focused specifically on those Russian-speakers who have moved to Finland for education or employment, family migrants, and those moving for marriage in particular, have received more attention. It is known that a large majority of Russian-speakers moving to Finland because of marriage are women. Between 2004 and 2019, the yearly number of Finnish men marrying a Russian woman varied between 164 and 465, and women from Russia are, together with women from Thailand, the most common 'foreign' spouses for Finnish men (Finnish Immigration Service 2021). At the same time, Finnish women married Russian men comparatively rarely, with the number of such marriages varying between 45 and 107 per year (ibid.).

According to previous studies, 'marriages between Russian women and Finnish men often introduce disturbing elements into Russian immigrant women's life-histories' (Säävälä 2010, p. 1150). In Finland, female Russian-speaking migrants have to deal with discrimination and stereotypes related not only to their ethnic identity but also to gender and sexuality, something that Davydova and Pöllänen (2011) have described as sexualisation of ethnicity (see also Koskela 2014a, p. 23; Säävälä 2010). This further highlights the importance of intersectional approach to acculturation, a topic that I will return to in section 7.4.

4.3.4 Finland-raised Russian-speakers

If the share of first-generation migrants among Finland's Russian-speaking community is likely to continue growing, so is the number of Finland-born and Finland-raised Russian-speakers. As I will discuss in chapter 5, their experiences often differ from both those of the first-generation migrants and those of the majority population; nor are they directly comparable to those of the so-called old Russians, whose families have been living in Finland for generations.

This highlights the importance of finding new ways and words for addressing the experiences of this growing (yet often forgotten) subgroup. In this thesis, I refer to them as *Finland-raised Russian-speakers*; while fully recognising the clumsiness of this expression, I find it preferable to second-generation migrants, which is viewed by many as exclusionary, and even to *Russian-speaking Finns*, which, while a good descriptor for those who identify as Finnish, does not leave as much space for multiple or alternative identifications.

4.4 The general acculturation landscape and integration policies in Finland

The increase in the number of Russian-speakers in Finland has coincided with a general surge in cultural diversity in the country. Finland has been a country of net migration only since the 1980's. While it is still more ethnically homogeneous than many European countries, and its share of foreign-born population remains low by international standards, migration has increased and diversified

in recent years. While only 1.3 percent of the country's residents had been born outside of Finland in 1990, the number had grown to 7.3 percent by 2019; similarly, 7.7 percent of the population were classified as having 'foreign background' in 2019, compared with only 0.8 percent in 1990 (OSF 2021).

Altogether, there were 351 721 first-generation and 71 773 second-generation migrants[11] living in Finland at the end of 2019. By country of birth, the most common minority groups are those born in the neighbouring countries - Russia and the former Soviet Union, Estonia, and Sweden - followed by Iraq, Somalia, China, and Thailand (OSF 2021). The proportion of people born outside of Finland is the highest in the capital region. Geographically, people born in Russia and the former Soviet Union form the largest migrant group in two thirds of the Finnish regions, and in some areas of Eastern Finland their share is more than 50 percent of all migrants (Saari 2013).

Officially, Finland's acculturation policy falls under the remit of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, headed by Minister of Justice and Labour, and is guided by the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (2010). The act defines integration as 'interactive development involving immigrants and society at large' which aims to 'provide immigrants with the knowledge and skills required in society and working life and to provide them with support, so that they can maintain their culture and language', closely mirroring the academic understanding of integration (see chapter 2). In line with the requirements of the integration act, the state supports the maintenance of minorities' cultural heritage through, for instance, subsiding the organisation of heritage language classes for elementary school pupils and providing financial support to third-sector organisations working in the field of acculturation.

Immigrants to Finland are entitled to a range of integration services, including an initial assessment and integration plan, training, financial benefits, and language courses. People who do not speak Finnish or Swedish are guaranteed the right to interpretation or translation services when dealing with official matters. Information on the acculturation services and the rights and obligations of Finnish residents is available in the most common minority languages, including Russian.[12] Libraries have books and other materials in a range of languages, and often include large Russian collections in localities where the concentration of Russian-speakers is high. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare published information and instructions concerning the virus is various minority languages, again including Russian.

Despite the linguistic support provided to acculturating individuals, both the public discourse and official integration materials emphasise the importance of learning one of the country's official languages, in practice either Finnish

[11] For critical discussion of the term second-generation migrant, please see chapter 1.2.

[12] For example, the website infofinland.fi, providing information about moving to Finland, life in Finland, and the official integration services and policies, is available in Finnish, Swedish, English, Russian, Estonian, French, Somali, Spanish, Turkish, Chinese, Persian and Arabic. The website is published by the city of Helsinki and funded by the state and participating municipalities.

or Swedish.[13] This is because Finland is officially a bilingual state, and the two national languages have equal position and rights in the eyes of the law. Swedish was the only official language of Finland until 1863, and is today the first language of some five percent of the population, known as the Swedish-speaking Finns. The language policies are the subject of continuous political debate, but for now, students in elementary schools, high schools and tertiary education have to study and pass exams in Swedish (and, in Swedish-language schools, Finnish) in order to graduate. Moreover, public officials are required to obtain qualifications in and be able to use both languages, a law that is sometimes seen to discriminate against native speakers of other languages and to hinder the employment of migrants. (Nousiainen 2016, p. 145; Protassova and Tuhkanen 2003, p. 9-10.)

Despite the clear definition of integration in the immigration act, discussed above, the word is sometimes used in a way that more closely resembles assimilation in both public discussions and in official materials. For instance, in 2017 the web page of the Finnish Ministry of Interior described integration in the following terms: 'Integration means that immigrants adapt themselves to Finnish society and acquire new skills, competences and practices which help them actively participate in the life of their new home country', leaving out the maintenance of the heritage culture(s) and the role that the receiving society plays in the process of acculturation. Moreover, the availability of integration services offered by municipalities - as well as by the third-sector organisations that receive a mention in the governmental integration programme - often vary by location. For example, in 2016, despite the generous state subsidy, the city of Kotka decided to discontinue heritage language classes, leaving the linguistic minority pupils - a large part of them Russian-speakers - without native language tuition (Viimaranta et al. 2018).

While it is thus important to acknowledge that theory and practice do not always go hand in hand (Koskela 2014b; Heikkilä and Peltonen 2002), Finland scores highly in the Migrant Integration Policy Index. In 2014, it ranked fourth of the 38 surveyed countries, beaten only by Sweden, Portugal and New Zealand. Finland's MIPEX score, 69, translates as slightly favourable. It does particularly well in labour market mobility and political participation, and scored the lowest points in the area of healthcare (MIPEX 2015). Another notable finding is that, according to MIPEX, people living in Finland have some of the most positive attitudes towards immigrants in the European Union, with 80 percent agreeing that non-EU immigrants should have the same rights as Finnish citizens. In the next section, I will discuss their attitudes towards Russian-speakers in particular.

[13] Additionally, the Sami, Romani and sign language are recognised as minority languages and thus also have a special position in Finland, although in practice there have been problems with, for instance, securing Sami-language education and childcare. Despite its long history in Finland and the large number of Russian-speakers in the country, Russian has so far not been recognised as an official minority language.

4.5 Attitudes towards Russian-speakers in Finland

Attitudes of the majority population are one of the most important modifying factors in the process of acculturation. They can have a noteworthy influence on the lives of minorities, and perceived discrimination is one of the central factors affecting the social and psychological adaptation of migrants and other ethnocultural groups. Constant worrying, self-hatred, passivity and increased levels of stress are just some examples of the many potential adverse effects of having to deal with prejudice and racism (Allport 1958; Jaakkola 1994; Berry et al. 2006).

As mentioned above, Finnish residents have some of the most positive attitudes towards immigration in Europe. Research has shown, however, that these attitudes vary significantly depending on the minority group. In general, Russian(-speaker)s[14] are low in the Finnish ethnic hierarchy (Jaakkola 2005, pp. 22, 25). This hierarchy 'has a direct link to immigrants' experiences in Finland' (Koskela 2014a, p. 22), making them more susceptible to discrimination and its negative consequences. In fact, along with Somalis, Turks and Iraqis, Russian-speakers are among the most common victims of racist crimes in Finland (ECRI 2013), and Russianness has been described as a 'stigmatized nationality' (Clarke 2014, p. 65).

Notably, the European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (2010) found that discrimination against Russian(-speaker)s was more common in Finland than in the Baltic States, where their position has received a fair amount of international attention: the share of Russian(-speaker)s who indicated that they had been discriminated against in the 12 months preceding the survey was 27 percent in Finland, compared with 4-17 percent (as discussed above) in the Baltic States. In 2013, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI, recommended that the Finnish authorities strengthen their effort to combat discrimination and prejudice faced by the country's Russian-speaking minority. According to the ECRI report, discrimination is particularly problematic in the field of employment. Despite their generally high level of education and good command of the Finnish language, a disproportionately large number of Russian-speakers remain unemployed. One study showed that job seekers with a Russian name had to send in twice as many job applications as someone with a Finnish name just to get invited for an interview (Larja et al. 2012).

Another major problem is discrimination experienced by children, particularly in the context of education. Research indicates that the risk for bullying, exclusion and even physical violence in school environment is higher for students belonging to ethnic minorities (Souto 2013; Menesini and Salmivalli 2017). While more research is needed on ethnic and other prejudice-related bullying in schools, existing studies suggest that it can be particularly damaging if leading

[14] Many of the studies on racism speak of Russian (rather than Russian-speaking) minorities. However, as I will show later in this chapter, many Russian-speakers are racialised as Russians, regardless of their ethnic identities or backgrounds.

to reluctance in attending education: Zacheus et al. (2019) reported a clear link between experiences of discrimination in school and dislike of school.

In her ethnographic study on everyday racism in Finnish schools, Souto (2011) found that ethnic minority students experienced racism both from other students and from teachers. The racist incidents ranged from exclusion, denial of Finnishness and insults relating to the students' country or culture of origin to racist slurs, threats, and physical violence. Teachers would sometimes downplay or ignore racism, or participate in racist discourses by highlighting only negative aspects of certain cultures, expressing anti-Russian sentiments, and constructing discursive cultural hierarchies with West on top.

Another study investigating everyday racism in Finnish kindergartens found strong prejudice and negative perceptions and attitudes among daycare workers towards people of Russian, Estonian and Somali background (Front 2019, p. 38). The prevalence of racist attitudes in kindergartens and schools may help explain why, in the present study, Finland-grown interviewees reported experiencing more discrimination than adult migrants (see chapter 7).

One of the most common ways in which racism against Russian-speakers comes to play in schools and in other domains is through the use of the slur 'ryssä', a racialized, derogatory insult aimed at Russians. In testament to the prevalence of the phenomenon, the verb 'ryssitellä' is derived from the same word stem and means to call someone 'ryssä', while the noun, 'ryssittely', refers to the act of insulting someone in this way. According to Keskisalo (2003), 'ryssä' is part of the construction of Finnishness. The epithet continues to be widely used despite the fact that using it may constitute a criminal offence (Shenshin 2008, p. 26); in August 2013 it was even revealed that the judges of the Helsinki Court of Appeal had used 'ryssä', along with offensive words for other minority groups, during their deliberations and breaks (Sipilä 2013; Tarvonen 2013).

While 'ryssä' is a slur aimed at Russians, both existing studies and my fieldwork suggest that it is often used against people who are assumed to be Russian regardless of their ethnic or national identity and heritage. In fact, despite their different backgrounds, discrimination is a potential problem for all Russian-speakers, even the 'ethnically Finnish' returnees. This may seem contradictory at first, particularly when considering the difference in attitudes towards 'ethnic Russians' and Ingrian Finns. According to a study conducted in the early 1990's (Jaakkola 1994), when the return migration of Ingrian Finns had just began, the Finnish majority population had in general a positive outlook on the immigration of Ingrian Finns. Their attitudes towards the immigration of ethnic Russians, in contrast, were predominantly negative. The situation was no different in 1998, when Ingrian Finns were among the three most desirable and Russians among the three least desirable immigrant groups (Jaakkola 2000).

Yet, in everyday life, an average Finn has little chance of differentiating between the two groups. In fact, many of the people I interviewed both during this fieldwork (see chapter 7) and for my Master's dissertation (Tuhkanen 2013) emphasised that Finns tend to treat all Russian-speakers as Russians, re-

gardless of their 'actual' national or ethnic background.[15] Unsurprisingly, those who identified as Finns in particular were disappointed in the prevalence of the discourse questioning their Finnishness and frustrated about being denied the right to name themselves as Finns. This is particularly important with relation to the recent deterioration of relations between Russia and 'the West' that has led to some sensationalist and stigmatising media representations of Russian(-speaker)s, especially as research has found that the psychological well-being of minority members may depend less on the actual level of discrimination than on the increase in discrimination over time (Sam et al. 2016, p. 512).

Here, it should be noted that, despite its prevalence, the discrimination against Russian(-speaker)s is not always recognised in public discussions on anti-racism. This is partly due to the tendency of grouping them together with (other) white and European minorities when discussing discrimination, even as several studies show that, in the Finnish context, Russian(-speakers) do not necessarily enjoy the privileges associated with these groups. For instance, in his paper on ethnic discrimination in the Finnish job market, Ahmad (2020, p. 3) divided minority groups into European and non-European and included Russians in the former category, arguing that 'multiple surveys (e.g., Jaakkola 1999, 2005) have revealed that immigrants from European countries occupy a much higher place in the ethnic hierarchy than their non-European counterparts'. However, the attitude studies cited in the article actually show that Russians were, depending on the year, among the three or four 'least wanted' of the surveyed ethnic groups, below many non-European ones (Jaakkola 2005).

The question of recognition is an important one, because denial of racism is often used as an excuse or a mitigating factor when those experiencing discrimination attempt to challenge it (Puuronen 2011). In fact, several of the people I interviewed talked about their experience of being racialised and viewed as 'the Others' in many aspects of their daily lives, but assigned whiteness and/or Europeanness when they tried to challenge instances of discrimination (see chapter 7).

The challenging is made all the more difficult by the fact that the discrimination experienced by Russian-speakers in Finland is widely understood to be based on historical reasons, particularly the two wars between Finland and the Soviet Union during the Second World War (ECRI 2013). This interpretation reflects the discursive framing of Russian-speakers, who 'are commonly (and simplistically) perceived as representatives of Russia—a powerful, and at times threatening, neighbouring country, with which the Finns have had to contend for centuries as imperial subjects, trading partners or enemies at war' (Viimaranta et al. 2018, p. 98). Leaning on Bauman (2013b), who has pointed out that racism is a modern weapon which utilises anti-modern emotions, I would argue that a large part of the negative attitudes towards Russian-speakers actually stems from a conscious process of nation-building. Russia has for long played the part of the Other, 'the archetypal enemy' in contrast to which the Finnish

[15]It should also be noted that, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6, many Russian-speakers come from mixed families, identify with more than one ethnic group, or renounce ethnic divisions altogether.

ethnic, national and religious identities have been constructed (Karemaa 1998). As a consequence, 'Russianness' and 'Finnishness' are often seen as two polar entities. Illustratively, one of the most famous catchphrases of the 19th century Finnish national awakening was the still widely-used 'we are no longer Swedish, we do not wish to become Russian – let us thus be Finnish!'. (Iskanius 2004; Karemaa 1998; Raittila 2004.)

Regardless of what their causes are, it is clear that racism and discrimination can have serious effects on the lives of those who suffer from them, and can also affect the society at large. For instance, in her study on Russian-speaking adolescents, Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000, p. 50) found that those preferring separation or marginalisation scored higher for perceived discrimination that those preferring integration and assimilation, although a causal direction was not established. This further highlights the importance of controlling for perceived discrimination when studying acculturation.

4.6 The religious landscape of Finland

The social position of religion in Finland could be described as secularised and privatised (Martikainen 2004, p. 79). While the number of Finns who officially belong to a religious organisation remains high, it has fallen considerably in the last 30 years. During the same time, both church attendance and commitment to religious doctrines have also declined (Kääriäinen et al. 2005, p. 167).

Despite this, the classical secularisation theory, according to which religion is gradually losing its social significance in modernising societies, has proven too simplistic for the Finnish context (Salomäki et al. 2020; Beckford and Demerath 2007, p. 1; Kääriäinen et al. 2005, p. 166). For instance, the number of Finns who believe in God has remained stable since the 1970's, and private practice of religion is more common than in an average European country. Moreover, it has been suggested that the decline of institutional religion has been counterweighed by the rise in certain types of popular religiosity, such as those focusing on rites of passage or on Lutheran traditions as part of Finnish cultural heritage. (Kääriäinen et al. 2005, p. 167.)

Freedom of religion and conscience are guaranteed in the Constitution of Finland. The Freedom of Religion Act contains provisions on religious membership, communities, and the teaching of religions in school. There are special laws guiding the organisation and administration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church of Finland, both of which have a special status as institutions under public law, including the right to collect tax. Moreover, there are 136 religious communities and 346 congregations or other local communities listed in the Finnish Register of Religious Communities, kept by the Finnish Patent and Registration Office (PRH 2020).[16] These communities, the biggest of which are the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Evangelical Free Church of

[16]These numbers exclude the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church of Finland, which are not part of the register.

Finland and the Catholic Church in Finland, have the right to collect donations and fees to finance their activities (OKM n.d.).

The special position of the Evangelical Lutheran and the Finnish Orthodox churches is one of the most notable features of the Finnish religious landscape. As established national institutions, both enjoy certain privileges (and have certain responsibilities) over other religious organisations, one example being the above-mentioned right to collect taxes from their members. Although the state church system was discontinued in the 19th century, both the FOC and, in particular, the Evangelical Lutheran Church are often considered de facto 'state churches' of Finland.

There is a striking difference between the two churches in terms of their size. Nearly 70 percent of Finland's inhabitants belong to the Lutheran church (Suomen evankelis-luterilainen kirkko 2020), making it the most Lutheran country in the world based on membership numbers (Kääriäinen 2009, p. 50). In contrast, only 58 899 people, or just over one percent of the population, are members of Orthodox congregations (Suomen ortodoksinen kirkko 2020).

As discussed above, the total numbers of religious membership are considerably lower among Russian-speakers, 77 percent of whom are not members of any officially recognised religious organisation.[17] In addition to the legacy of the Soviet Union, discussed above, the trend can be at least partly explained by the fact that people in Russia and many other countries do not become registered members of a church in the same way as they do in Finland (Kääriäinen 2009, p. 56). Consequently, the idea of having to officially join a religious organisation is foreign to many Russian-speaking migrants (see chapter 8). At the same time, it has to be noted that, while the membership numbers of Russian-speakers are in great contrast to those of the majority population, they are still higher than those of the average foreign-language resident,[18] 84 percent of whom do not belong to any officially recognised religious organisation (OSF 2016).

Despite the generally low membership numbers among first-generation migrants, migration has affected the religious landscape in Finland through, for instance, increased religious pluralism and diversification of membership in the traditional churches (Kääriäinen et al. 2005; Martikainen 2013). The effects of this vary notably between different religious organisations: while in 2019, only 1.2 percent of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church had been born outside of Finland (below the 2 percent average for all religious organisations), this number was 14.6 percent for FOC, 25 percent for Jewish communities, 50.5 percent for the Catholic Church, 52.8 percent for the Anglicans, 61.2 percent for Muslim communities and 72.0 percent for the Buddhist communities. People born outside of Finland also make up a sizeable share of Finland's non-religious population: out of those who do not belong to any religious community, 20.7 percent are foreign-born (Salomäki et al. 2020).

It is quite common for both the so-called national churches and other re-

[17] The share of those who belong to Orthodox churches is however considerably higher among Russian-speakers (13 percent) than the majority population.

[18] Statistics Finland uses the term foreign-language resident to refer to people whose native language is not Finnish, Swedish or Sami (OSF 2016).

ligious organisations to organise worship services and other events aimed at members of cultural minorities. For instance, around eight percent of Finland's Lutheran parishes say they organise or have organised activities in Russian language (Salomäki et al. 2020). Due to the high level of Russian-speaking parishioners, organisation of Russian language events is more common among Orthodox parishes. The next section will focus on the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, one of the central locations of my fieldwork.

4.6.1 Example of a fieldwork site: The Orthodox Parish of Helsinki

Figure 4.3: A fieldwork photo from central Helsinki, April 2018. The Uspenski Cathedral can be seen in the background.

Because the share of Russian-speakers is considerably higher in Orthodox parishes than in other religious organisations in Finland, these also offer the widest range of Russian-speaking services. A good example of this is the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, the biggest Orthodox community in Finland and the main site of my fieldwork.

The Orthodox Parish of Helsinki is an administrative unit within the Orthodox Church of Finland, an autonomous church within the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Orthodox Parish of Helsinki n.d.). The parish consists of 21 places of worship located in different parts of the Uusimaa region in Southern Finland. The most famous of these is Uspenski Cathedral, one of the largest Orthodox churches in Western Europe. The Cathedral was consecrated in 1868, when Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian empire. With its instantly recognisable redbrick facade, golden cupolas and position on top of a small hill, it is one of the most famous buildings in Helsinki, and a popular tourist attraction for Finns and foreign visitors alike.

The Cathedral is located about a ten-minute walk away from the considerably smaller Holy Trinity Church, the oldest Orthodox church in Helsinki and now the centre of the parish's Church Slavonic services. Until 1990, services in Church Slavonic had been held in the Uspenski Cathedral (fieldwork interviews).

The parish is explicitly multicultural and multilingual; out of the 20 000 parishioners, only 77 percent are native Finnish-speakers. Altogether, over 40 different mother tongues are spoken in the parish. Russian-speakers amount to 15 percent of the official membership numbers; however, as will be discussed in chapter 8, their share may be even higher among those who participate in the services but have not officially joined the church. (Helsingin Ortodoksinen Seurakunta 2015.)

The parish employs both a multicultural priest and a pastor of Russian-speaking work. In addition to the services in Church Slavonic, bilingual liturgies in Finnish and Russian (as well as in Finnish and English, Finnish and Swedish, Finnish and Greek and Finnish and Romanian) are conducted regularly. The parish also provides a variety of non-religious services offered in Russian (see chapter 9). The parish journal, Ortodoksiviesti, includes content in Russian, and the parish also has several Russian-language pages on social media, including Facebook and VK (Vkontakte).

4.7 Previous research among Russian-speakers in Finland

As one of the largest minority groups in Finland, Russian-speakers have been the subject of a substantial amount of studies in disciplines ranging from linguistics to library studies and from healthcare to history. Despite this, Zamiatin (2017, p. 42) has argued that there is currently little information and research available on Finland's Russian-speakers, highlighting the need for more studies into this growing minority group.

My focus in the following short review will be on studies concentrating on a) acculturation b) identity and c) religion and the role of faith-based organisations for the acculturation and identity construction of Russian-speakers living in Finland. The goal is not to list all of the studies conducted on these topics, but to highlight the findings, contradictions and themes that are particularly relevant to the present study.

4.7.1 Acculturation and adaptation

The acculturation of Finland's Russian-speakers has been approached from a wide variety of disciplines, methods, and research questions. Some studies and reports address the acculturation of Russian(-speaker)s as a whole (e.g. Shenshin 2008; Varjonen et al. 2017) while others focus on certain subgroups, such as adolescents and young adults (Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind 2000; Lähteenmäki and Vanhala-Aniszewski 2012; Rynkänen and Pöyhönen 2010), remigrants (Lönnqvist et al. 2015; Mähönen and Jasinskaja-Lahti 2016), or Russian(-speaking) women (Diatlova 2018; Krivonos 2015; Saarinen 2007; Pöllänen 2013; Warkentin 2000).

Comparative studies have contrasted the acculturation of Russian-speakers in Finland with those in other countries, such as Estonia (e.g. Renvik et al. 2018) and Israel (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2011), or with other minority groups in Finland (e.g. Liebkind 2004; Kuittinen et al. 2016; Kyntäjä 2004; Mannila and Reuter 2009; Nieminen et al. 2015).

Most studies on adaptation conducted among Finland's Russian-speakers approach it from one domain, focusing, for instance, on psychological well-being or social relationships. Their results vary. For instance, in a study measuring life satisfaction among different groups in Finland, 75 percent of the people whose country of background was marked as Russia or the Soviet Union said their quality of life was good, a figure nearly as high as the 77.9 percent seen in the total population (Castenada and Kauppinen 2015). In the same study, 88.8 percent of respondents with a Russian/SU background said they were satisfied with their social relationships, compared with 76.7 percent in the total population. Moreover, Castenada et al. (2015) found that only 5.6 percent of people with Russian or Soviet background reported feeling lonely (compared with 9 percent of the total population) and over 90 percent said they have at least one Finnish friend.[19]

These results seem to suggest largely unproblematic and successful adaptation. By contrast, other studies highlight potential challenges in the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speaking minority. In their interviews with different stakeholders - including teachers, social workers, and civil servants - working directly with different minority groups on local, regional, and national levels, Pöyhönen and Tarnanen (2015) noticed that the interviewees discursively constructed difference between minorities and presented certain groups as facing obstacles with relation to their integration, with Russians presented as one of

[19]These results contrast with my own findings, to be discussed in chapter 5.

these at-risk groups. In a similar vein, Mannila and Reuter (2009) suggested that 20 percent of Russian-speaking migrants in their study showed accumulation of social exclusion risks, defined as cumulative unemployment, subjective poverty and subjective ill-health.

In their recent review of the acculturation of Russian-speakers in Finland, Renvik et al. (2020) found that Russian-speakers are generally well adjusted and cherish ties to both the Russian culture and the Finnish society, but often face discrimination and mistrust which pose a challenge to their adaptation. Researchers have also called attention to the low political participation among Russian-speakers (Varjonen et al. 2017) and to the position of Russian-speaking women in Finland (Davydova and Pöllänen 2011).

4.7.2 Identity

Despite the relatively large amount of research focusing on Russian-speakers, the identity of Finland's Russian-speaking minority has not yet been extensively studied (Varjonen et al. 2017).

One might assume that, for reasons described in this chapter, it can be difficult for a minority member to build a hybrid Finno-Russian identity. However, in her study on Finland's Russian-speaking immigrant youth, Iskanius (2006) found that almost half of her respondents identified as both Russians and Finns. Iskanius also observed a clear connection between language and ethnic identity; students who heard both Finnish and Russian at home felt more connected to Finland than those who only spoke Russian in their family. However, identifying with Russian language did not exclude bilingual or bicultural identity.

Other studies, too, have indicated that at least part of Finland's Russian-speakers reject the nationalist call for 'choosing sides', instead using their ability to re-negotiate identities and belongings on many different levels to their benefit. Looking at Russian-speaking immigrant adolescents, Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000, p. 47) reported a 'wide variation in the ethnic and linguistic self-identification' with 'two clearly independent dimensions, one reflecting their Russian identity and the other their Finnish identity'. Interestingly, the extent in which the adolescents used Russian or Finnish language in their daily lives, instead of their proficiency in them, was a predictor of their ethnic identities (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000, p. 48).

In the same study, Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000, pp. 49-50) identified three phases in the identity exploration process of young Russian-speaking migrants. At first, the Finnish component of their ethnic identity was emphasised and the Russian one rejected. The second stage was characterised by the questioning of ethnic identity. In the third stage, participants accepted the identity they had formerly rejected.

The changeable, context-dependent nature of identity was also accentuated in a longitudinal study by Varjonen et al. (2013), who examined the ethnic identity construction of 'ethnically Finnish' remigrants before and after their move from Russia to Finland. While pre-migration, respondents mostly defined themselves as Finns and emphasised the differences between Finns and

Russians, in post-migration data they rarely referred to their Finnish identity, instead presenting themselves 'in a variety of ways – as returning migrants, Russians, "partly Russian" or Ingrian Finns' as well as immigrants and human beings (p. 129). In a similar vein, a study on ethnic re-migrants from Russia to Finland found a negative association between perceived discrimination and national identification (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2012).

In their study, Liebkind and Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000) reported 'considerable interrelatedness' between ethnic identification and acculturation attitudes, with Russian identity correlating positively with separation and Finnish with assimilation. They also found immigrants' age on arrival to Finland to be related to separation, whereas time spent in Finland did not correlate significantly with any of the four acculturation attitudes. In another study by the same authors, a Russian contact orientation and language use were discovered to strongly relate to Russian identity, while a Finnish contact orientation and language use correlated similarly with Finnish identity (Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind 1998).

4.7.3 Religion

As the number of migrants in Finland has grown, so has their impact on the country's religious scene. Yet religion has traditionally played only a minor role in the research on Finland's ethnocultural minorities (Martikainen 2004, p. 21). Similarly, it has not been at the forefront of Finnish integration policies, and most religious organisations have not forged any explicit immigration strategies (Timonen 2014).

This should not be taken to mean that they do not participate in the acculturation process. In his report on the work conducted by religious communities promoting the acculturation of immigrants in the Uusimaa area - perhaps the most extensive recent study on the topic - Timonen (2014) found that faith-based organisations advance integration in many ways and often have a more open-minded view of what it entails than official government bodies. On top of providing migrants with everyday assistance and important social communities, many of the organisations surveyed also employ immigrants, which can be particularly important for adaptation in the light of employment discrimination that they often face.

With relation to discrimination, and with reference to the prevalence and high membership numbers of the Lutheran state church, Martikainen (2004, p. 74) has suggested that people coming from non-protestant and non-Christian backgrounds may face greater challenges than others when adapting to Finland. As discussed above, migrants may face difficulties when their religious beliefs are met with prejudice (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011, p. 6). Based on both my previous fieldwork in Finland (Tuhkanen 2013) and on other research on the topic, this is not a problem that Russian-speakers encounter often, or at least as frequently as discrimination based on their ethnic, national and linguistic backgrounds. In a study on employment of Russian-speakers, conducted by the Finnish Ombudsman for Minorities (Vähemmistövaltuutettu 2010), none of the 24 respondents reported facing discrimination because of their religion when applying for a job.

For comparison, a quarter reported having been discriminated against in the same situation due to their ethnic or cultural background.

Interesting information on religion's role can also be discerned from studies that do not directly focus on religion. For instance, in their study on the lived experiences relating to the COVID-19 pandemic among three migrant groups in Finland, Finell et al. (2021) found that for many Arabic- and most Somali-speakers turning to God was an important way of coping with the situation. Similar accounts of religion as a protective factor were not discussed with relation to the Russian-speaking study participants.

As discussed in chapter 2, one important theme to consider with relation to religion's role in the processes of acculturation is its connection with ethnic identity. Although I found no studies confirming this in the Finnish context, studies from other countries (see for example Kravchenko 2018; Turunen 2007) suggest that for many Russian-speakers, religion may gain particular significance through the role that the Russian Orthodox church plays in formation of post-Soviet Russian identities. Similarly, for protestant Ingrian Finns, Lutheran church has traditionally functioned as an important symbol of Finnishness. However, participants of a study on Russian-speaking adolescents in Finland did not rate religion as an important uniting factor for Russians *or* Finns (Iskanius 2004). This suggests that the significance of religion, particularly for younger members of cultural minorities, should not be taken as a given.

4.8 Conclusions

This chapter has situated the current study within a certain political, geographical and historical context through discussion of the global Russian-speaking diaspora and the changing role of religion in the post-Soviet space, as well as the religious landscape, official integration policies, and attitudes towards Russian-speakers in Finland.

The chapter has highlighted the diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking minority, but also the fact that many of its members believe all Russian-speakers, regardless of their identity or background, are viewed and treated as Russians - a theme that was repeated frequently throughout the fieldwork and will be discussed in more detail in the future chapters.

Chapter 2 called attention to the need of controlling for the context of reception when studying acculturation. This chapter has highlighted the importance of this with relation to Russian-speakers due to their generally low position in the Finnish ethnic hierarchies, discrimination experienced by some members of this community in domains such as education and employment (Larja et al. 2012; Puuronen 2011; Souto 2011) and historical narratives that have presented Russian(-speakers) as the Others in contrast to whom the Finnish national identity has been constructed (Karemaa 1998; Raittila 2004). At the same time, the chapter has also shown that the Finnish immigration act highlights integration (as opposed to assimilation, separation, or marginalisation) and that Finland scores highly in international comparison of integration policies (MIPEX 2015).

The review of prior studies conducted among Finland's Russian-speaking community has identified a clear need for further research into this minority group in general and certain questions in particular. Specifically, the topic of identity and the role that religion plays in the lives of Russian-speakers seem to merit more attention, as do their connections to the processes of acculturation. These processes are the focus of the next chapter, based on original qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter 5

Acculturation and Adaptation

5.1 Introduction

The main goal of my thesis is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speaking minority. In the previous chapters, I have presented the framework of acculturation from which I approach this research (see figure 2.2) and discussed one of its central parts, group-level acculturation, with reference to the global Russophone diaspora, Finland's Russian-speaking minority, and the Finnish integration policies. In this chapter, the focus will be on individual acculturation. Specifically, I will focus on the interplay of acculturation attitudes, other important moderating factors, and adaptation, often defined as the behavioural, psychological and sociocultural changes brought about by acculturation (Berry 2003, p. 21). I argue that conventional approaches to this topic often underplay the importance of psychological and emotional factors. Moreover, researchers need to better account for the plurality and hybridity of cultures and the fact that individual acculturation landscapes vary notably also between members of the same minority group.

In the first part of the chapter, I will discuss the different ways in which the experiences of migration on one hand, and growing up in Finland as a member of a minority on the other, affected the adaptation of Russian-speakers in my sample. I will show how the processes of acculturation were affected by various moderating factors, such as the interviewees' personal circumstances, and touch on significance of class and education as it emerged from the data. Some moderating factors, I argue, are significant enough to merit closer inspection. Thus, I will explore the questions of identity and identification in chapter 6 and the effects of discrimination in chapter 7. The particular focus of this thesis is on the role of religion and religiosity as factors moderating acculturation and adaptation, especially their psycho-social aspects. The role that religion and faith play in acculturation, and the lives of minority members more broadly, will be explored in chapters 8 and 9.

The second part of this chapter is dedicated to a closer exploration of the

different domains of adaptation, with focus on some of the most central ones as defined by prior research (see Berry et al. 2006, Ward and Rana-Deuba 1999) and confirmed by the qualitative fieldwork I conducted: language, (other forms of) sociocultural adaptation, and psychological adaptation, as well as the interplay between them.

This chapter builds on several theoretical and empirical standpoints. Firstly, as discussed in chapter 2, acculturation and adaptation have traditionally been approached from the viewpoint of cultural learning. In this approach, the onus has been on the members of the minority to integrate or even assimilate into the 'local' culture, and adaptation has often been operationalised in terms of language skills, employment, and the knowledge and observance of local customs – relatively easily measurable factors that are often the focus of official integration programmes (Bijl and Verweij 2012, pp. 209-2011).

While all of the above can be important steps in the process of acculturation, they are by no means exhaustive - or, as I will suggest in this chapter, necessarily indispensable - components of successful adaptation. In particular, these markers are often not suitable for assessing the adaptation of Finland-raised Russian-speakers and other minority members who go through the process of enculturation (see section 2.2.1) in their country of residence, thus often speaking the language and practising 'the local culture' and customs since early childhood - even though, as I will show in this chapter, these skills do not always protect them from problems related to acculturation or necessarily lead to successful outcomes in other areas of adaptation.

But the focus on language skills, local customs and economic integration is also insufficient for assessing the adaptation of first-generation migrants. The interviews highlight the need to prioritise the psychological and social well-being of acculturating individuals, particularly as a wealth of studies has established that migration, minority position, and acculturative stress can increase the risk of problems such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, and feelings of isolation, as well as various somatic symptoms (Allport 1958; Carta et al. 2005; Lanzara et al. 2019; see chapter 2).

Another problem with the approach centring the 'local culture' is that what exactly is meant by or included in it often goes undefined. This, as some interviewees noted, can make it difficult to create any kind of a mental 'checklist for adaptation'. Is taking a sauna each Saturday - a tradition cherished by many Finns - a sign or a good measure of adaptation? Both public discussions and official integration materials give more weight to certain parts of culture than to others; it seems that what is expected is an implicit understanding of an idealised form of 'the Finnish way of life' that is not only difficult to reach but that in reality might not even exist (Bodström 2020). While most interviewees had a certain idea of what constitutes (mainstream) *Finnish culture*, and many accounts show notable similarities, there was also a lot of variation in these accounts and, importantly, this was never the only culture in relation to which the processes of acculturation and adaptation were taking place. In this chapter, I part from the understanding that, as discussed in section 2.5, there are not one but several local cultures, and that in addition to navigating acculturation with

relation to them, Russian-speakers living in Finland also have to adapt with relation to the local Russian-speaking communities, possible previous countries of residence, as well as the increasingly ubiquitous 'global' culture and the changes and transformations that all cultures undergo with time (see figure 2.2).

Finally, while sociocultural adaptation is often discussed as one whole, I have decided to divide it into three separate categories of analysis: cultural adaptation, social adaptation, and language. This choice reflects the findings - to be discussed in more detail in this chapter - according to which, while most research participants found it easy to adapt to Finnish culture in terms of such markers as food, traditions, social order, and so forth, many described challenges relating to the Finnish language as well as loneliness and (lack of) meaningful social relationships. My hope is that examining these domains separately, as well as in interplay with each other, will allow us to better understand the processes of adaptation of Russian-speakers in Finland along with addressing the implicit question looming behind acculturation research: what do we mean when we speak of successful acculturation?

5.2 Factors moderating acculturation

As outlined by Berry and Sam (1997, pp. 299-302) and discussed in chapter 2, individual acculturation is affected by several moderating factors. Some of these are preexisting, while other arise in the process of acculturation.

One of the most important of such factors is the division between those who have grown up in Finland and those who have moved to the country in adulthood.[1] As will be discussed in section 5.2.4, the former group often had no problems with relation to cultural adaptation, but faced their own set of challenges, particularly with relation to cultural maintenance, identity, and prejudice and discrimination (see also chapter 7).

For those who had experienced migration, aspects relating to this process, - such as the motivations for migration and voluntariness of the move - were often some of the most important moderating factors. Demographic factors - such as age, gender and education -, economic status, and personal circumstances also played a significant role in the processes of acculturation regardless of the individuals ethnic, national, or migratory background.

5.2.1 Migration motivations

Migration scholars (see White 2017) frequently refer to pull and push factors to explain people's decision to move countries. In the context of this research, push factors - those that had prompted the research participants or their family members to leave their previous countries of residence - included lack of stability, political dissatisfaction, personal problems, worries about children's education

[1] It has to be noted that the two categories are not mutually exclusive: some of the Finland-raised interviewees also had first-hand experience of migration, even if their recollections of it were not always as clear as the memories of those who had migrated in adulthood.

and discrimination against the LGBT+ minorities, while pull factors centred around family, employment, more interesting career prospects, better education opportunities, and, in the case of Ingrian Finns and other co-ethnic remigrants, the chance to 'return home'. In general, pull factors were cited more often and given more weight in the respondents' accounts than push factors, although in many instances the decision to move had been affected by a combination of the two. Additionally, interviewees sometimes mentioned factors that did not neatly fit either category, such as 'a sense of adventure' or 'grabbing the opportunity since it was there'.

Overall, while it was often easy to identify both pull and push factors in the narratives of the research participants, most accounts revealed the complexity of the migration process. Rather than a resolute choice based on a detailed cost-benefit analysis and close weighing of different factors, interviewees often presented their decision to migrate as something guided by chance rather than by careful consideration. Moreover, it was often presented as a decision that was considered and reconsidered at different points in time, not just at the pre-migration but also at the post-migration stage.

In fact, White (2017) has argued that migrants already living abroad also experience pull and push factors, such as longing for the country of origin (pull) or unemployment in the country of residence (push). In addition to their previous and current countries of residence, some interviewees also mentioned pull factors in relation to other countries; for instance, Estonia was presented by few interviewees as a potential future country of residence as it had a 'richer' Russian-speaking community life than Finland. A sense of indecisiveness or temporariness was not uncommon among the interviewees, and, as will be discussed in section 5.5.4, this could complicate adaptation and affect long-term plans and major life decisions, such as choosing to settle down with a partner or buying a house.

5.2.2 Voluntariness of the move

As the fieldwork progressed, it became clear to me that there were potentially significant differences in adaptation based not only on whether someone had personal experience of migration or the reason for their move to Finland, but also on whether this move was voluntary, forced by the circumstances, or decided by others. While some interviewees had taken the decision to move themselves, others had been 'forced to migrate' either because their parents had decided to make the move or because their partner was based in Finland. Moreover, two interviewees had arrived in Finland as refugees.

Berry (2006) has distinguished between several categories of acculturating groups - voluntary migrants, sojourners, refugees and asylum seekers, indigenous people, and ethnocultural minorities - and suggested that these categories, along with reasons for migration, affect the processes of acculturation and adaptation. Some interviewees addressed this directly. Kira, who at the time of our interview was in her early twenties, suspected that her childhood experience of being a refugee had affected both her understanding of and attachment to *home*. After

leaving her country of birth through Finland, Kira and her family had originally settled in another EU country, where she had attended preschool and learnt a bit of the language. However, the family had soon been forced to return to Finland, their first country of entry to the European Union. Kira suspected that these experiences could at least partly explain why, unlike many of her peers, she had no interest in moving away from Finland:

> Maybe when you've basically had to leave as a child, you're left with this [feeling] that, when you have settled down and stayed somewhere, you don't want to leave [again].

While the experiences of 'regular migrants' are not, as a rule, directly comparable to those of refugees, some interviewees whose parents had made the decision about emigration without consulting them also described how stressful they had found the move. Tamara was one of them. She had grown up in a small Karelian village, raised mostly by her grandmother. When she was 12 years old, her mother, who had settled in Finland after marrying a Finnish man, decided that Tamara should join her in Finland. Instead of feeling excited to be joining her mother in a new country, Tamara recalled feeling sad about leaving her grandmother, her friends, and the 'simple life', as she described it, that she had been leading in Karelia. In Finland, she had to adapt not just to a new country, but also to a new living situation - with her mother, new step-father and their kids - and the separation from her primary caregiver, her grandmother.

5.2.3 Personal factors, positionality, and class

Tamara's account and process of adaptation were in stark contrast to those of Vera, who, as a young adult and after visiting the country several times, had made the conscious decision to move to Finland because she liked and respected the Finnish society and its values. While Vera also faced difficulties in her adaptation - for example, at the time of our first interview, she was worried about her residence permit not getting renewed if she were to lose out on highly competitive postgraduate funding - she had been able to plan for many of the potential challenges ahead of time, and had resources - such as friends that had been living in Finland for longer and could advise her, along with other social and cultural capital - that she could lean on at times of difficulties. In fact, it was often not only the voluntariness or involuntariness of the move, but also the social and financial position of the acculturating individual that affected the adaptation, particularly in the first years following migration. Vera acknowledged this herself:

> Maybe it's also about how I position myself, or how my life has turned out. I'm more of a citizen of the world than, you know, a Russian girl coming for a better life or something.

In this instance, Vera's use of the phrase *citizen of the world* refers not just to a cosmopolitan identity (see section 6.2.2) but also to a certain position that

sets her apart from those 'coming for a better life'. Similar comparisons were brought up by several interviewees, and sometimes used to differentiate them from other Russian-speakers, as described in section 6.3.3. This was the case for Alina, who had moved to Finland to be with her Finnish boyfriend:

> This question of how to get settled is some kind of a theme for many Russians who come to Finland as their first port of call [–]. They probably came here from some ... well, from some truly bad circumstances, and this is *the life* for them. And so they're all 'how to arrange things, how can we remain here'. [– Whereas] I came here because of education maybe, and because of my partner. I didn't have the goal of getting a better life. That is, my life was pretty good to begin with.

The story of Jelena, who had moved to Finland in her late 40s together with her Ingrian Finnish husband, is another good example of the importance of different types of capital, as well as of the multimodality of adaptation. Having visited Finland fairly regularly for two decades preceding the move and spent a lot of time with her Ingrian Finnish in-laws, Jelena did not find the cultural side of adaptation challenging - in fact, she was already familiar with the Finnish language and customs and had Finnish acquaintances, including her husband's family. However, she struggled with adapting to the change of living conditions that came with the move, particularly with having to move to a shared accommodation at 'that age, a small room for two, where you both eat and sleep..'.

Jelena's account suggests that being well adapted in one sphere does not guarantee satisfactory adaptation (as perceived by an individual herself) in another, and vice versa: despite the (what turned out to be temporary) lowering in her living standards, Jelena enjoyed life in her new home country and emphasised many times that moving to Finland was 'a gift' that she was grateful for. It also challenges the common notion of economic or financial gain as the primary pulling factor for migrants, particularly those coming from a non-Western country. With regards to this, it is interesting to go back to the story of Tamara, who wanted to highlight that, even though her life was, in financial terms, richer in Finland, she preferred the peace and quiet of the simple village life she had enjoyed in Russia. Through acknowledging the conflict between what the receiving society sees as a privilege - the move to the West - and her own preference for continuing life as it had been in Russia, Tamara challenged the expectations of gratefulness, often faced by migrants. This challenge was echoed by Alina, who said that Finland was not a dream destination for emigration among her Russian friends:

> I simply think that Finland is, probably, the most... how should I put it... the easiest country for Russian citizens in terms of moving abroad and, consequently, there's more... I don't want to say yobs [ишлак] but people [–] with whom you can drink beer and discuss

> construction, but no more than that... So it's not.. not high intelligentsia. For example, I have very few friends who left for Finland. [–] Maybe in St. Petersburg there are people who run [to Finland], right, but [–] among my acquaintances in Moscow it's either England, or, I don't know, what ever: France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, some type of Europe. But Finland, very rarely...

Alina's depiction of Finland as not an attractive choice to - at least a certain type of - Russians, excluding those in the neighbouring Leningrad region, challenges the common narrative of Finland as a prestigious destination. Having previously lived in another Western country, the language of which she spoke fluently, where the 'weather was better' and where she found it easier to make friends, Alina saw herself having more opportunities in other countries; by moving to Finland to be with her boyfriend, she was making a compromise for love. Consequently, she did not subscribe to the narrative of gratefulness.

This was an interesting exception in the narratives of those participants who, like her, had moved to Finland as grown-ups. Alina's description of Finland as a country that she liked and respected - she mentioned Finnish values, education, political system, and several other things that she highly appreciated about living in Finland - but did not need to put on a pedestal was more akin to those of Finland-raised interviewees. The next section will focus on their accounts.

5.2.4 Growing up in Finland as a Russian-speaker

Around one third of interviewees and 12 percent of survey respondents had either been born in Finland or moved to the country before the age of 16. Most of them spoke Finnish as one of their, or, in some cases, as their only native language. All had gone to school fully or partly in Finland, and many had Finnish(-speaking) friends or family members. By most markers, they were not that different from their (what one interviewee described as) 'fully Finnish' peers. Against this backdrop, I had to wonder: are *acculturation* and *adaptation* the right terms to use when talking about these members of Finland's Russian-speaking minority?

However, the interviews indicate that, while as fluent as any other Finnish resident in matters such as language, traditions, and cultural norms, Finland-raised Russian-speakers face a unique set of questions and challenges - related to both their position as Russian-speakers and their parents' position as (usually) first-generation (re-)migrants - that most members of the majority population do not need to consider. As Birman and Simon (2014, p. 208) point out, for immigrant children and children of immigrants the processes of acculturation are intertwined with those of enculturation and development. In short, while the meaning of adaptation might be - and often was - different for Finland-raised interviewees, the process itself was not necessarily any less significant.

Notably, Finland-raised interviewees also encounter challenges that are not relevant for first-generation adult migrants. Russian language is one of the fields where the differences between the adaptation tasks of the two groups became

visible: many Finland-raised interviewees mentioned they worried about not speaking Russian 'well enough' or even forgetting the language and strategised about ways in which they could manage to preserve the culture and the language for future generations, even though most had no children at the time of the interviews. Another example, and one much discussed in literature on second-generation migrants (Phinney and Baldelomar 2011) is the potential clash between the competing norms, expectations and pressures of one's family on one hand and the receiving society on the other. Kira, for instance, recalled feeling annoyed that the rules her parents set for her as a teenager were much stricter than those set for her friends, who 'could go where they wanted and do what they wanted'. Like many children of migrants, she also remembered having to help her parents and other family members take care of official tasks through, for instance, acting as an unofficial translator or language broker (see Crafter and Iqbal (2020)) – another difference to her Finnish-born peers that sometimes irritated her.

Overall, the accounts of Kira and other Finland-raised interviewees suggest that, for them, the two acculturation questions defined by Berry (see chapter 2) were not abstract theory but something that they, at least at times, had had to consider on a conscious level since early age. Russian language classes were one example where the significance of such considerations became visible. In Finland, many primary education pupils whose native language is not one of the country's official languages have the option to attend lessons in their mother tongue for two hours per week on top of their regular classes. As these classes are not compulsory and not part of the regular curriculum, they are often held after the end of the school day and sometimes require the pupils to travel between schools. As such, attending them often requires some determination from the pupils and their families. One interviewee recalled that, while she recognises the value of Russian language as an adult, as a child she was sometimes reluctant to attend the lessons because they were held late in the afternoons but also because she 'didn't like to stand out from the crowd'. What had seemed to her like the best or at least the easiest acculturation strategy in childhood (assimilation) was quite different from what she saw as important and beneficial as an adult.

The acculturation challenge most commonly mentioned by Finland-raised interviewees related to psychological adaptation and to the feeling of (lack or ambiguity of) belonging in particular. Interviewees often talked about narrow ethnic and national norms and how difficult it is to fit into them for people who identify with more than one ethnicity, nation or culture (see chapters 6 and 7). The following account from Elvira, who had grown up between St. Petersburg and Helsinki with a Russian father and a Finnish mother, is representative of the pressure caused by narrow ethnic and national norms as well as the feelings of 'not knowing where you belong' or 'not properly fitting anywhere' that Finland-raised interviewees often mentioned in interviews. In Elvira's case, she experienced this both in Russia and in Finland:

> [W]hen my parents started a family, they had hope that Russia would go in a good direction, so they built a family... on the border,

> you know, half in St. Petersburg, half in Helsinki. People were interested in new things, things that came from Europe, there was space for multicultural families, for other ways of thinking. For instance in the 7th grade, when I came to the school [in Russia], I was included in everything, everyone in the class had a very good attitude towards me. 2014, that for me is the year when everything changed. In '14, I remember how we were sitting in the kitchen, listening to the radio, and we were listening to the news, to what was happening in Ukraine [–] I go to school [– and] there was complete silence. [–] As a European young girl, I stand for the rights of minorities [–] and in principle, how I was raised, I have very European points of view. And here started the division between me and my classmates. Russia started closing away from Europe, focusing on itself, the rise of nationalism, and fear... In the end I was sitting at the back of the classroom, alone. It wasn't clear that this was because of political opinions, but it was like... Hop, and everyone was gone.
>
> [interviewer:] How long did this continue?
>
> [Elvira:] [Until] we left. [And then] in Finland... I recently spoke with my friend, and we spoke about discrimination, and school, and how we were treated. And she told me directly: you were not liked because you are Russian. I said: really? She said: Well, yes. Because Russians are dirty. I said: really? She said, yes. That when I was about to start the school [in Finland], they wrote on the Internet: Now this Russian rat is coming to our school.

While Elvira's case was different from other Finland-born interviewees in that she had lived both in Finland and in Russia, her account highlights many common themes that emerged from the interviews. In Finland, she did not feel accepted due to her ethnicity; in Russia, due to her political activism which contrasted with what she viewed as her classmates' passivity. The feeling of being 'the Other' both among the Finns and the Russians was also brought up by Mikael. While Mikael's experiences of discrimination from other Finns, discussed in chapter 7, were the ones that had affected him the most, later on in the interview he remarked that, although these were not discrimination as such nor directly related to his ethnicity, he 'also had some less nice experiences with Russians and Russia'. For example, he mentioned noticing that some Russian-speakers in Finland could be unduly critical of their fellow Russian-speakers or other minorities, something that he found crude and untactful and put down to seeking approval from the majority population. Mikael also felt that there was a lack of a sense of community not only among Russian-speakers in Finland (an opinion shared by many interviewees, as discussed in section 6.3.3) but perhaps also those in other countries. He recalled telling Russian tourists whom he was chatting to in Helsinki that he also had 'Russian background' and being slightly taken aback when he noticed that they were not particularly interested in this:

> Both in Russia and in Finland [–] the attitude is a bit like, aha, OK.

> A bit of a curt reaction. Some other countries have much warmer attitudes towards multicultural kids.

Elvira echoed this sentiment, recounting how happy and accepted she had felt when, during a trip abroad, she had told a group of Scots she had met there that, generations back, one of her forefathers had moved to Russia from Scotland:

> They were like, ooh, so you're Scottish, that's amazing! They welcomed me as one of their own. And this felt really lovely to me.

These fleeting, seemingly inconsequential encounters were symbolically important, because they signified (a chance for) acceptance - being read as part of the ingroup, as 'one of us'.

Like Mikael and Elvira, Laura, too, sought out connections abroad and with people who understood 'what it meant to be from more than one country'. Having grown up in Southern Finland, at the time of our interview she studied abroad in a large Western European city. There, she felt, having a multicultural background was much more common and, consequently, more accepted than in Finland - a factor that, she said, made her 'feel at home'.

When read through the prism of acculturation strategies, the accounts of Mikael, Laura and Elvira all hint to predisposition towards a strategy that has often been grouped together with marginalisation but that would be better described as 'cosmopolitanism' (see chapter 2). While marginalisation has often been understood as distancing oneself or being distanced from both the culture or origin and the receiving society (or, in this case, from the two or more cultures of origin), cosmopolitanism as an acculturation strategy could be better described as ignoring ethnic or national sectarianism in favour of a more global outlook not centring ethnicity or nationality. While markedly similar to marginalisation in some ways, it seems that, like hypothesised among others by Kunst and Sam (2013), this cosmopolitan strategy does not come with similar negative consequences for well-being. In the next section, I will discuss this question, and Russian-speakers' acculturation strategies in general, in more detail.

5.3 Acculturation strategies and adaptation

Acculturation strategies are one of the most important moderating factors in the process of acculturation. As discussed in chapter 2, strategies adopted by an individual are usually not fixed or static but can change with time and depending on the circumstances; the same person may and often does prefer different strategies in different domains and situations.

This phenomenon was well illustrated by the qualitative data. While some interviewees expressed a strong overall preference for a certain strategy, others combined elements of different strategies into their personal, complex and multilevel network of attitudes, preferences, behaviours, and wishes relating to

the processes of acculturation. Notably, the construction of such networks and strategies did not necessarily take place on a conscious level. Again, here there were noticeable differences between the participants: while some had put a lot of thought into what successful adaptation meant for them and made 'action plans' based on this, others preferred to 'go with the flow', as expressed by one young woman.

It should also be noted that, regardless of what acculturation strategy an individual may prefer, his or her adaptation will also be affected by external factors, such as integration policies of the host society and attitudes of the majority population (see chapters 2 and 7). Berry (2009) has gone as far as arguing that integration cannot take place if the society of residence does not support it. Based on the fieldwork, I propose that this is not necessarily the case, and probably depends on what is meant by support. Many people I met and interviewed during fieldwork underlined their preference for integration even while pointing out that they did not necessarily feel that this was the strategy preferred by the majority population, at least in the case of Russian-speakers. Yet many of these participants could have been described as 'well integrated' by the standards of the four-fold model in that they often had both Finnish- and Russian-speaking friends and identified as both Finns and members of another ethnic group and/or the Russian-speaking minority.

Here, the question of what is meant by support becomes central. By international standards, Finland does support integration in various ways. As described in chapter 4, integration is the goal explicitly outlined in the Integration Act (2010), and there is support available for both immersion into the mainstream culture and maintenance of heritage culture. On the other hand, as also mentioned in chapter 4, the availability of services varies by municipality. It is also important to consider the difference in attitudes between the official actors and the 'society at large': practical experiences (such as being shouted at for speaking Russian on the public transport, an experience many interviewees shared) may create a feeling that the maintenance of one's own culture is not welcome even while the governmental guidelines and official institutions recognise its importance. Consequently, I propose that lack of societal support for integration, or at least the perceptions thereof, while definitely complicating integration, do not make it impossible; however, lack of support and perceived discrimination in particular may become reflected in psychological adaptation of minority members, regardless of whether or not they are viewed as 'successfully adapted' by others.

This discrepancy between strategies and practice often became highlighted with relation to social adaptation, and friendship in particular: many interviewees expressed their willingness to have 'Finnish friends', yet pointed out that this was easier said than done. As will be discussed in section 5.5.3, some interviewees felt that Finns were not keen on being friends with Russian(-speaker)s; others pointed to what they viewed as their 'insufficient language skills' as a reason to why they did not and perhaps could not have Finnish friends. On the other hand, having good language skills or identifying as a Finn did not necessarily mean that one preferred integration or assimilation in the social sphere,

Acculturation strategy	Mean	Std. dev.
Integration	4.18	0.60
Assimilation	2.49	0.65
Separation	2.04	0.60
Marginalisation	2.05	0.61
Cosmopolitanism	3.86	0.75

Table 5.1: Acculturation strategies among survey respondents.

as evidenced by Inga's account:

> I know the language quite well, I think so, the spoken language at least. Or knew, in any case. [But] I don't want to have contact. It's not interesting to me.
>
> [Interviewer]: Not interesting precisely with Finns or...?
>
> Yes, with Finns, it's not interesting to me. I don't know why, I can't say, especially as I'm a Finn by blood. It's just not interesting. Even when I worked at [workplace], I didn't have any close friends there. Of course, I had good relations with everyone, I went to all the corporate parties, but to have friendship...

While this multimodality of acculturation means that acculturating individuals often make use of different strategies in different situations (like Inga, who preferred integration in the public and separation in the private sphere), it has for long been suspected that, as a general strategy, integration leads to better outcomes than other strategies. Studies have also found that it is often the strategy preferred by members of the acculturating groups (see Chapter 2). The data collected in the course of this research provides more evidence that migrants and other minority members tend to prefer integration over other strategies: out of the four 'traditional' acculturation strategies, integration was the most popular both among the interviewees and the survey respondents (see table 5.1).

However, the suggested fifth strategy, cosmopolitanism, was nearly as popular as integration and considerably more popular than assimilation, marginalisation or separation. As a rule, cosmopolitanism as a strategy is not included in most research on acculturation. However, it is interesting to consider its relationship with the more established acculturation strategies. Recently it has been argued (see Cohen 2011; Kunst and Sam 2013) that part of those who scare high on marginalisation measures may, in fact, be oriented towards cosmopolitanism, i.e. that cosmopolitan outlook can sometimes present as marginalisation. Sometimes this was also evident in the qualitative material, such as in the account of Elvira, who was vocal in her criticism of both Russia and Finland - the first due to the political situation in the country, the foreign policy and the infringements on the rights of sexual and other minorities, the second due to discrimination

	Coef. (Std. Err.)
(Intercept)	9.59^{***}
	(1.38)
integration	-0.05
	(0.21)
assimilation	0.21
	(0.19)
separation	0.38.
	(0.20)
marginalisation	-1.06^{***}
	(0.20)
cosmopolitan_strategy	-0.27.
	(0.16)
R^2	0.12
Adj. R^2	0.10
Num. obs.	217

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $.p < 0.1$

Table 5.2: Coefficients and model statistics for the multiple regression model predicting life satisfaction.

faced by ethnic minorities, the lack of cultural diversity and the difficulty that she had experienced of being accepted as a Finn while having a multicultural background - and identified instead as a citizen of the world. While thus distancing herself from both Russia and Finland and Russians and Finns, she did not fit the profile for marginalisation - instead of isolating herself, she sought out friends who, like her, 'don't fit into the rims of the monoculture'.

Based on previous studies and the fieldwork, I hypothesised that integration as a strategy would be linked with more successful acculturation outcomes, particularly in the sphere of psychological adaptation. However, statistical analysis did not confirm this hypothesis. A multiple regression analysis was run to determine the relationship between the different acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation, operationalised as life satisfaction. Results showed that there was a collective significant effect between the variables ($F(5, 218) = 6.014, p < .001, R^2 = .12$). As expected, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between life satisfaction and marginalisation (see Figure 5.1). Unexpectedly, separation had a possible small positive correlation with life satisfaction while cosmopolitan strategy had a possible small negative correlation with the same outcome. Table 5.2 shows the coefficients of the multiple regression model. Contrary to predictions, no statistically significant relationship was found between other acculturation strategies and life satisfaction.

Multiple regression analysis also showed a collective significant effect between the five acculturation strategies and health, ($F(5, 215) = 4.734$, $p = .0004$,

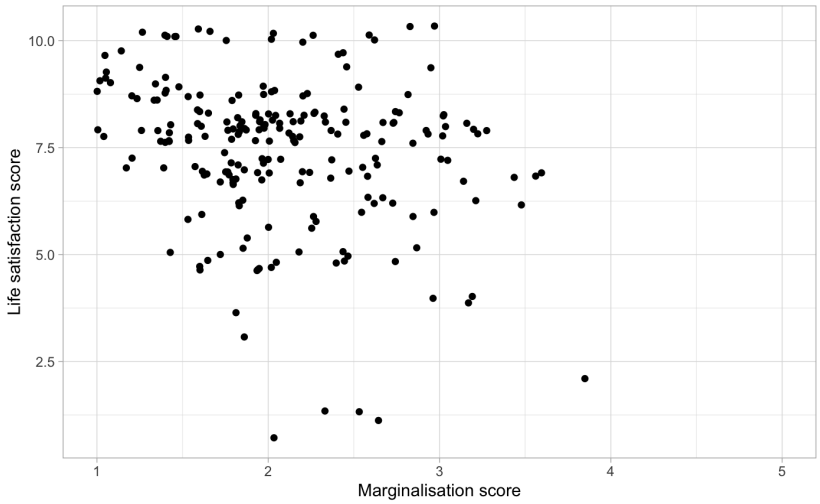

Figure 5.1: The pairwise relationship between marginalisation and life satisfaction scores.

R2 = .099). Again, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between health and marginalisation (t = -2.731, p = .007). Small statistically significant relationships were also found between health and separation (t = 1.988, p = .048) and health and cosmopolitan strategy (t = 2.802, p = .006). Again, there was no significant relationship between self-assessed health and other acculturation strategies.

Thus, the statistical analysis does not provide support for the hypothesis that integration as a strategy would necessarily relate to best adaptation outcomes among Finland's Russian-speakers. This provides support for Rudmin (2009a, 2006, 2003) who has challenged 'integrationalism', arguing that integration is not necessarily required for successful adaptation and that both separation and assimilation may lead to satisfactory psychological outcomes. In fact, in my sample separation was positively related to both life satisfaction and to self-assessed health. This brings about the question asked by Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh (2001, p. 43): may separation be a psychologically 'safer' strategy than integration when the acculturating group, like Russian-speakers in Finland (see chapter 7), experience othering and exclusion?

Importantly, and in line with most previous studies (see chapter 2), the analysis confirms that marginalisation does seem to relate to less successful adaptation outcomes than other strategies. With relation to this, it is necessary to consider whether marginalisation can be thought of as a strategy in the first place, or if it is better understood as a consequence of exclusion, as suggested in chapter 2. In fact, as expected, regression analysis showed a statistically significant positive relationship between discrimination and marginalisation (t = 4.061, p $<$ .001), once again highlighting the importance of controlling for

context of reception and experiences of discrimination when studying the acculturation of minority groups.

5.4 Adaptation landscapes

In Berry's model of acculturation strategies (see chapter 2), acculturation is seen to consist of two domains. There is slight variation in the exact definitions of these domains, but in most research they are operationalised as adapting into the culture of the new society on one hand and maintaining one's own cultural heritage on the other hand. As discussed in chapter 4 and as will be illustrated by chapter 6, in the case of Russian-speakers living in Finland, 'one's own cultural heritage' can acquire a wealth of different meanings and refer to a vast number of cultures and identities. For some, it may signify Russian culture. Others, by contrast, have constructed their cultural identities in opposition to Russianness. At the same time, part of the Russian-speakers who don't identify as Russians nevertheless understand Russian culture to be 'their own'. Many have grown up in multicultural families and identify with more than one culture. For some, Russian culture and Russian-language culture are synonyms, while others view them as separate entities. For many remigrants, Finnishness is both a heritage culture and the culture of the host society.

If heritage culture means different things to different Russian-speakers, it should also be noted that the Finland(s) they are adapting into can vary based on, among other factors, their occupation, socioeconomic position, or place of residence. While Finland is generally regarded a socially and culturally homogeneous country, regional differences do exist and may be of importance in the process of acculturation, particularly as the number and share of Russian-speakers and other minorities vary greatly from region to region.

The goal of this section is to illustrate the different communities of adaptation relevant to Russian-speakers and shed light on how their positionality can and does affect these. To illustrate the many domains in which adaptation took place, as well as the difference in the context of adaptation between interviewees, I will next map out the adaptation landscapes of two women I interviewed, Jelena and Elvira.

Jelena: before and after

Jelena had moved to Finland in her late 40s; at the time of our interview, over two decades later, she was approaching her 70th birthday. She had grown up and spent most of her life before emigration in what she described as a small Russian town, although, as she pointed out, the town was actually of similar size to Helsinki: 'but there it's a provincial town, and here it is the capital'. Before her move, she had been employed in a supervisory position in a 'prestigious' place of work. Jelena's move to Finland had been voluntary, and she had planned it together with her Ingrian Finnish husband.

Before	After
Russia	Finland
Former hometown	Helsinki
Majority	Minority
Respected professional	Job-seeker
Owning a house	Living in a dormitory
More multicultural	Less multicultural
Religion in SU & Russia	Religion in Finland
Eastern Europe	'The West'

Table 5.3: Examples of Jelena's domains of acculturation

During the course of our interview, Jelena spoke of her experience of adaptation into or with relation to Finland; the Finnish society; the Finnish culture; the Finnish language; her new hometown; the neighbourhood where she lived; change in family dynamics; change in circumstances, living conditions and societal position; the Russian-speaking community in Finland; the religious landscape of Finland; the Orthodox church of Finland; and her local parish.

Some of these facets of adaptation she found easy and largely unproblematic, while others, such as having to move into shared accommodation, were or had been more difficult to navigate. Despite these difficulties, Jelena's processes of acculturation and adaptation can be described as relatively straightforward. The decades that she had spent in Finland had brought about changes to her self-identification, personality and understanding of home, but it was still relatively easy for her to map the changes and her whole process of acculturation in terms of 'before' and 'after', as in the table presented above.

The table provides a snapshot of Jelena's adaptation landscape at a certain point in time. However, her interview highlighted acculturation as an ongoing process rather than a terminus. In fact, 'integration is not just an outcome, but also a sequence of events and experiences', although this should not be mistaken for a linear progress to integration (White 2017, p. 140). This was particularly visible in Jelena's account of overcoming difficulties related to the change in circumstances and social position following her move to Finland and how she had succeeded in adapting to them either through accepting them or through changing them. For instance, with time Jelena and her husband had moved out of the shared dormitory and into an apartment of their own. Jelena had also been able to find employment in Finland in a field that she enjoyed more than her previous position in Russia. At the time of our interview, she had been retired for a number of years, and said she felt at home in Finland. In this sense, her account reflected what could be called the ideal(ised) timeline of adaptation in which the acculturating individual gradually becomes more well-adjusted as time passes.

Elvira: monocultural expectations vs multicultural reality

Jelena's process and landscape of adaptation were in notable contrast to that of Elvira. At 19, Elvira was one of the youngest people I interviewed during the fieldwork. As discussed earlier in this chapter., she had grown up between Finland and Russia. In contrast to the experiences of most adult migrants, whose adaptation often starts at a distinct point in time, in Elvira's account there was no such division into 'before and after'. Instead, her life had been marked by movement between the two countries and cultures since childhood. Both Helsinki and St. Petersburg, both Finnish and Russian culture were familiar to her. In addition to this, Elvira felt she also belonged to another ethnocultural minority, actively sought out international friends, and identified as a citizen of the world. In fact, her account is a good example of how, particularly for children of multicultural families, it can be 'difficult to disentangle enculturation from acculturation' (Birman and Simon, p. 209).

Elvira approached acculturation from the position of someone for whom both Finnish and Russian culture were 'her own'. Thus, her ingroups and outgroups were not based on ethnicity, nationality, or physical movement from one place to another. Rather, the divisions she viewed as significant were established around certain values, worldviews or historical events. For instance, Elvira described 2014 as 'the year when everything changed' and, even though she identified as a 'Western girl', this identity had only gained salience in the aftermath of the political events of that year. For Elvira, the biggest challenge relating to adaptation seemed to be adjusting to the 'cult of the monoculture', her experiences of discrimination, and what she felt was a highly alarming rise of nationalism in both of her home countries.

At a first glance, the task of adaptation may seem easier for Elvira than for Jelena, who had to adapt to a new culture, learn a new language, and who, unlike Elvira, could not pass as Finnish (see chapter 6). However, the interviews reveal that some aspects of adaptation, particularly those related to psychological adjustment, proved equally if not more challenging for Elvira. For instance, while Jelena said that she now felt at home in Finland, had no desire to move back to Russia and even sometimes experienced a 'reverse cultural shock' when visiting her former hometown, Elvira did not feel settled in Finland and struggled with her lack of contact with Russia, particularly as her family had decided against visiting the country for the time being due to the political climate. This struggle was evident in Elvira's recollections of her recent 'clandestine' visit to St. Petersburg, where she had walked the streets of her former home city and 'cried, cried, cried' because she felt it would be impossible for her to return to live there, at least in the near future. To counter this longing for contact with Russian culture, Elvira searched for opportunities to immerse herself in 'that cultural sphere', something that she also associated with her faith:

> Currently my contact with the Russian world is very feeble, and I struggle with that. So I decided, OK, I'll travel to the Balkans. Because there it's also... it's that cultural sphere, even though it's

> different, and I thought that maybe there I would also feel... well, the language is different, but they're also Orthodox.[2]

Both Jelena's and Elvira's accounts highlight the importance of time in the acculturation process. While Jelena's acculturation had become easier with changes bought about by time, making her feel better adapted, for Elvira the opposite had been true due to political changes she had observed in both Finland and Russia. They also showcase that the meaning of acculturation and adaptation can vary greatly between acculturating individuals and centre around different spheres or domains. In the next section, I will discuss the domains of adaptation in more detail.

5.5 Domains of adaptation

5.5.1 Language

Language is often viewed as a cornerstone or even a prerequisite of successful adaptation. In this section, I will show that fluency in one of Finland's official languages is not necessarily a predictor or a critical dimension of social, cultural or psychological adaptation for members of Finland's Russian-speaking minority. First of all, some of them, in particular those born in Finland, speak Finnish or Swedish as (one of) their native language(s). In fact, as discussed above, for some interviewees the real challenge was in maintaining the Russian language, not in learning Finnish. Secondly, the opinions on the centrality of Finnish varied a considerably also among those respondents who did not speak Finnish as their native language: fluency in Finnish (or Swedish) was seen as essential by some, but only some, people I interviewed.

These assessments were not necessarily related to how well an interviewee spoke the language. In fact, some of the interviewees and survey respondents who reported speaking Finnish well nevertheless criticised themselves rather harshly for what they viewed as lack of fluency or perceived defects, such as accent. On some occasions this happened even if I, as a native Finnish speaker, could only be impressed with their fluency in a language which is infamous for its difficulty and has even been described as 'the most difficult language in the world' (Latomaa 1998). The importance given to Finnish language and the overly critical appraisal of one's own linguistic abilities, evident in some narratives, was often connected to the fact that 'inadequate' language skills were regarded, by some, as an impediment to full acculturation – sometimes even as the biggest obstacle in the way to successful adaptation. Consider, for example, Kira's view on how speaking Finnish could affect the attitudes of the majority population:

> I think language [is the key]. It affects everything, and I think that when you know how to speak, Finns may have a slightly different

[2] This account reflects religion's role in psychological adaptation, an important theme that I will return to in chapter 9.

attitude towards you. They will receive you better, then.

The significance of language also emerged in another interviewee's description of her former husband:

> For Estonians it's much easier to learn the Finnish language, and they blend in here much easier. Russians, especially pure Russians, not like [those of us who] heard Finnish from childhood so it was easier for us. For example, my ex-husband, who is just Russian-Russian. He was 30 years old when he arrived here. Even back in school, he had been a bad student. How could he learn Finnish... So he works as a bus driver for 25 years already, he has enough work, but he never... he has no Finnish friends, he can't speak to anyone about anything. [–] That is the whole problem. You can't feel the country if you don't know the people and if you don't know the language they speak. It's a fact. And language is the biggest obstacle. For Russians, [learning] Finnish is the same as for Finns learning Chinese. It's very difficult.

The interviewee links her former husband's lack of Finnish skills to his inability to gain Finnish friends and to properly adapt to Finland, to 'feel the country' and its people. The passage points, once again, to the difference between different types of acculturating individuals. In this case, it is 'the pure Russians', such as the interviewee's 'Russian-Russian' ex-husband, who are believed to be at a disadvantage compared to Ingrian Finns, who had heard Finnish in their childhood, and Estonians, whose language is very similar to Finnish.

The view of Finnish as an particularly difficult language to learn was shared by many interviewees, including those who were fluent in several languages - although, as Galya put it: 'I never thought about [whether leaning Finnish was difficult]. I just knew it had to be done.' At the same time, those who had managed to learn Finnish were not always enthusiastic about using it: one interviewee described that speaking Finnish made her feel 'like a bit of an idiot'. This could be seen as particularly problematic in the professional sphere, as Alina pointed out:

> I feel uncomfortable using Finnish, especially at work, because I'm a junior employee, and a girl in particular, if on top of that I will make mistakes in... well, in my speech, then that will be it. That is, my rating will simply drop below the plinth.

Being a junior employee and a young woman in particular, Alina felt that she could not afford to make any mistakes in her speech. She concluded that, due to these concerns, it was better for her to use English in professional life:

> It's better to say what I want to say in English, correctly, rather than in Finnish with mistakes.

Vera, who was fluent in several languages in addition to her native Russian, made an identical point:

> When you have an arsenal of several languages, you will always choose the one in which you can express yourself better, more professionally, rather than speaking... who knows how in Finnish. [– W]hy do it clumsily in Finnish, if you can do it beautifully, professionally, elaborately in English.

In Alina's and Vera's accounts, using 'correct' or 'beautiful' English becomes a strategic choice that benefits them more than trying to speak 'Finnish with mistakes'. This narrative was echoed by Mihail. However, if Alina felt that she could not use Finnish due to her position as a junior employee, Mihail was concerned that, as a line manager, speaking Finnish with his juniors could undermine his credibility:

> This is also why I don't try to speak Finnish at work, because then I would be at a lower level of communication, I wouldn't be able to form an argument...

The above accounts show that some interviewees - mainly young adults who had moved to Finland for work or for study - did not necessarily find not speaking Finnish problematic. These people were often highly educated, professionally successful and fluent in English, and often also in other languages. Speaking English, which they know as well as or even better than their colleagues, puts them on an equal footing with their Finland-born peers - something that is difficult if not impossible to achieve when speaking Finnish.

Many of these respondents, like Anton, felt that it was not necessary to speak Finnish in order to successfully acculturate to life in Finland:

> In my job you don't need Finnish, for me the process [of learning it] is purely a hobby. [–] There are absolutely no problems, you can live in Finland without knowing Finnish, particularly if you already have a job.

This is in stark contrast with the feelings of some other respondents, discussed above, who viewed fluency in Finnish as an indispensable life skill and a prerequisite of adaptation. Again, the difference seems to relate to personal circumstances of the acculturating individual – if you move to Finland as a professional or a PhD student, live in the capital region where there is more cultural diversity, have a job where you can communicate in English and encounter people who are more open to cultural diversity, it might be possible to feel well adapted on social, cultural economic and psychological levels without the knowledge of Finnish (or Swedish).

However, avoiding speaking Finnish was not an option available to many interviewees. As a consequence, people who spoke Finnish fluently 'but with an accent' could feel less adapted on linguistic level than those who were not

fluent in Finnish but could use English in most aspects of their everyday lives. This seemed to be partly related to the fact that accent is a site of racialised differentiation (Krivonos 2020) and that speaking Finnish with an accent could thus predispose interviewees to negative comments ('learn to speak properly first') and other forms of discrimination in a way that speaking English does not (see chapter 7).

Language skills could also relate to personal means, as paying for courses or private tutoring was not possible for everyone. While some were able to access free language courses through, for instance, their university, and those living in big cities often had access to the relatively affordable Finnish lessons organised by Adult Education Centres, for others, price and schedule were impediments to accessing language tuition. Several interviewees also mentioned that the quality of the courses they had attended left a lot to be desired, and Anton suggested that this was one of the areas where churches could play a role in supporting acculturation. Some interviewees also mentioned the stark difference between the 'official Finnish language' that they could learn from books and the informal spoken Finnish actually used by most people, regardless of their age or social position. Using the official language learnt from the textbooks in social environment could make one feel overly formal.

The use of Swedish was another theme that, while it only emerged in few interviews and survey responses, sheds light on how migrants can use languages strategically. While it is only spoken on a native level by some 5 percent of Finnish residents, Swedish enjoys the position of an official national language, and the governmental integration guidelines highlight the importance of learning *a* language, either Finnish or Swedish. As the latter belongs to the group of Indo-European languages and is thus closer to Russian, it is arguably easier for Russian-speakers to learn. A few interviewees mentioned that they were considering using it to pass the language requirements of the citizenship application:

> Finnish is definitely more difficult. With Swedish, because I studied a little Norwegian, I could basically catch what people were saying when they're, say, drinking coffee... I thought, in principle, since I'm in [a Swedish-language school], it would probably be stupid not to learn Swedish. Plus, if I'll be applying for the citizenship later, I think I'm going to do the test in Swedish, because it's much easier, and I'll feel more confident when taking the exam.

This section has highlighted that linguistic adaptation is not just about learning the languages, but also about strategic choices about when and how to use them. The next section will look at cultural adaptation more broadly.

5.5.2 Cultural adaptation

Cultural adaptation refers to adjusting to life in a new society, the ability to fit in and to function on the everyday level. In the data set, accounts of cultural adaptation were focused on first-generation migrants and on early stages of the

acculturation process, the first months and years following migration. This once again highlighted the role of time in the acculturation process, both in terms of the length of residence in the receiving country and as a specific 'point in time', a moment in history.

One theme emerging from the accounts of those who had moved to Finland shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union was the difference in the standard of living between Finland and their previous country of residence.[3] For Oleg, the difference had been so stark that he compared his arrival in Finland to an excursion into a museum. He recalled that the shops full of produce and even the (what now seemed to him like) absolutely basic interiors of people's homes had made a huge impression on him.

Yuri, too, said that the differences had initially seemed overwhelming:

> Everything was different, from the attitude of the people, from their language, the habits, how they say hello, how they say thank you in the grocery store... there were millions of different details which were certainly unfamiliar to me. I had to learn a whole new culture.

Yakov also said that he had experienced a big 'cultural shock' after his move to Finland. He tied this to what he viewed as fundamental differences in the Finnish and the Soviet mentality (менталитет):

> It was a completely different world, you understand. Not like a different country - a different world. Different views, a different attitude to life, a different attitude to people, to oneself... to everything.

Yakov's account underlines that acculturation is a long-term process: he said that it had taken him 15 years to start feeling at home in Finland. It also shows how challenging cultural adaptation can be; Yakov believed it had only been possible for him because he had put in 'a lot of work' over the years to 'kill the Soviet mentality' in himself.

Generally, however, cultural adaptation was presented by the research participants as more straightforward and unproblematic than linguistic or psychological adaptation. Both the survey and the interview data suggest that any problems relating to cultural adaptation, where they do arise, are rather slight. There is one notable exception: some 45 percent of survey respondents indicated that they have either moderate, great or extreme difficulties in making friends in Finland. This is very high compared to most other adaptation measures included in the survey. For comparison, similar scores for 'following rules and regulations', 'finding food that you enjoy' and 'practising your religion' were all below 10 percent, while even 'dealing with climate' - arguably a potentially difficult factor to adapt to in Finland, which is famous for its long, cold and dark winters - was moderately, greatly or extremely difficult for less than 15 percent of the respondents. (The mean scores for different domains of cultural adaptation are presented in table 5.2).

[3] At the same time, as discussed with relation to Jelena's experiences, some people did not experience a rise in standard of living following their move, at least immediately.

At the same time, for many participants it was exactly this social aspect that determined whether or not they felt successfully adapted. Oleg, for instance, said that he was 'probably 100 percent integrated' in other areas of life but did not 'have a social life'. While he said that this did not bother him, as he had enough contact with people at his work, some other interviewees felt its lack sharply, as will be shown in the next section.

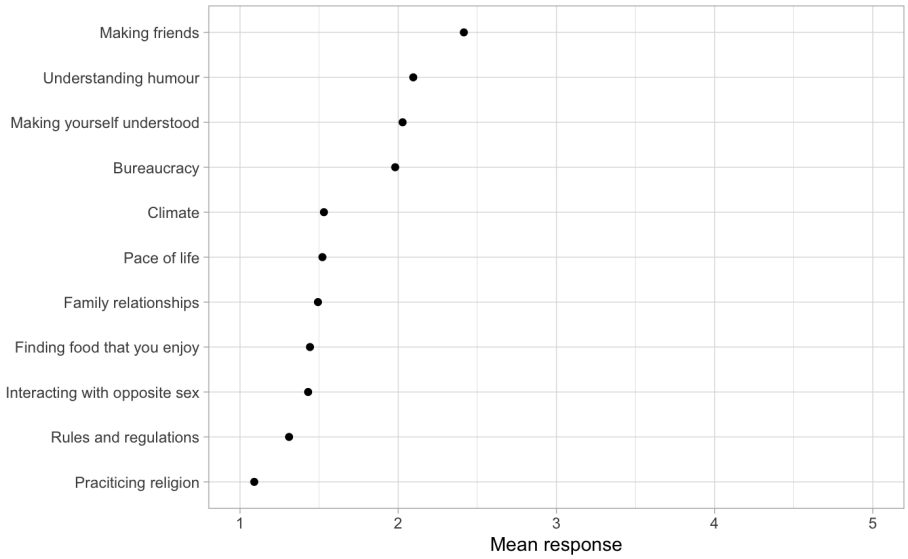

Figure 5.2: Mean scores for different domains of cultural adaption. Higher scores indicate greater difficulties in that area of adaptation.

5.5.3 Social adaptation

> I haven't become a part of this society, and I have no relationships with anyone, with whom I could go to the theatre or somewhere. [–] It didn't happen for me with Finns... I don't know why. It's probably my own fault.

Many interviewees highlighted social adaptation as one of the most important facets of adaptation. It was also an area where many interviewees and survey respondents, like Inga above, reported experiencing difficulties. For Misha, this had even prompted thoughts about moving away from Finland:

> You need social contacts. Even with my active life... sometimes it feels like something is missing, and that's when I started thinking about moving away [from Finland].

The data suggests that social adaptation in terms of close friendships is connected to other forms of adaptation, such as language skills. As one of the survey respondents wrote on the margins of the questionnaire: 'About friends: only one difficulty, insufficient knowledge of Finnish'.

However, the interviews, once again, suggest that the relationship between language and social contact is not necessarily so straightforward. As with using Finnish language in the professional domain, discussed above, some interviewees were apprehensive about speaking it in social situations and with potential friends, fearing that it could hinder rather than support their quest for meaningful friendships. The reluctance to speak 'broken Finnish' could be related to the fear of appearing less intelligent, less interesting or less funny - or simply to the feeling that they could not be fully themselves when speaking Finnish. For instance, Vera said that she was not interested in having the type of conversations that her Finnish skills would permit her to have, whereas using English made it possible to have 'grownup conversations':

> I can not imagine having friends with whom I would speak Finnish, because it would be like communication of a three-year-old child with an adult person.

At the same time, the respondents who did speak Finnish fluently often found that this was not necessarily sufficient for finding friendship, as Yakov explained:

> I'm not saying that my Finnish is perfect, no, but of course I understand everything. I have absolutely no problems with communication.
>
> [interviewer:] How about making friends?
>
> Now that is difficult. Because Finns aren't really keen on making contact, especially if you are from Russia. So that... I don't really have a lot of Finns as friends. I've lived here for so many years but still I haven't... and even the friends that I have, they are more like... Swedish-speaking Finns, or they are themselves from Karelia, or they had a grandad or a grandmum from Russia, something like that.

Studies have shown that perceptions of coldness emanating from the majority population are common among minority groups (White 2017, pp. 146-147). In my data, these feelings were sometimes mixed with views of Finns being 'by their nature' cold compared to Russians. This was reflected in the way in which many interviewees spoke about friendship: the image that appears is one of Finns as people who 'mainly keep in touch with their colleagues' (Anya) and who, in contrast with Russians, won't invite you to their homes (Tanya).

Maria, who had a lot of Finnish acquaintances, said that the whole concept of friendship was different in Finland. Moreover, she felt that it was difficult to build a true friendship after a certain age:

> I think that overall, Finns understand friendship a bit differently than us, Russians. It's difficult to explain, but... the friendship is different here, and plus after a certain age it won't become a [proper] friendship anyway.

Galya compared her current workplace in Finland with the one she had worked in before leaving Estonia:

> Sometimes I make comparisons. You come to the kitchen, we have a kitchen, you walk down the corridor [towards the kitchen] and you think there's probably no one in the kitchen. You enter the kitchen, and there are six of them sitting there, in the morning. Not a word. And I'm remembering, thinking, oh my God! At our work [in Estonia], in the morning, as soon as you come, the men will immediately tell a joke, something to share a laugh together. And here they sit [–] in complete silence! So what will you do, you will come, you will also be quiet! You will say hello and also take a newspaper, start reading [laughs]. So that... it's a bit boring with them, in that sense.

The above extracts show that, regardless of whether or not the respondents identified as Russians, many craved what they called the 'Russian', 'Russian-style' or simply 'our kind' of friendship. In their accounts, this type of friendship was characterised by closeness, simplicity and spontaneity, in contrast with shallower and often short-term 'acquaintanceship' that, the interviewees felt, could not offer them the type of connection they were looking for. It is thus not surprising that, in many accounts, social adaptation was related to psychological adaptation, the focus of the next section.

5.5.4 Psychological adaptation

The data on life satisfaction shows that Russian-speakers are, in general, quite satisfied with their lives: 50 percent of the respondents scored between seven and eight points on this question (measured on a 1 to 10 scale).

The interviews suggest that a sense of home, both as a physical place and a construct that 'can be carried through space and time' (McMichael 2002, p. 172) was one important factor in how well-adapted and satisfied with their lives the interviewees felt. A feeling of permanence and continuity was also important, and research has suggested that a sense of impermanence and temporariness may become impediments for deeper adaptation and to making connections in the local area (White 2017, pp. 137-138). This was the case for Misha, who struggled to decide whether or not he should apply for a loan to buy a house in Finland.

> When you need to buy an apartment and give guarantees for 10-20 years, I think: will I be here in 10-20 years? Is this still temporary or am I here for good? I haven't decided that yet.

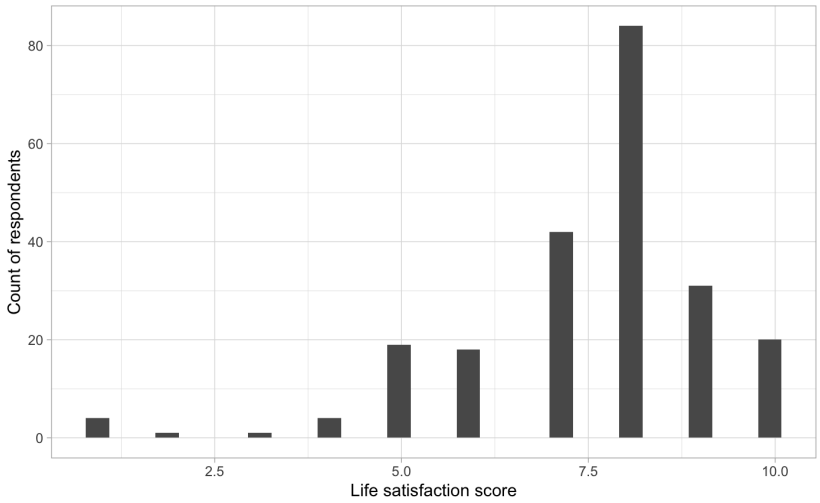

Figure 5.3: Life satisfaction scores among survey respondents.

As a long-term investment, buying a house would mean cementing the decision to live in Finland. Thus, the choice - already nerve-racking for many first-time house-buyers - is not just about choosing the right house, but also about choosing the right country of residence, a decision Misha felt unable to take despite having lived and worked in Finland for many years. He felt that this 'indecisiveness' also made it difficult for him to make other major life decisions, such as committing to a partner.

> In principle, this probably prevents you from building life in the long-term perspective. If, to be frank, you meet a partner who connects their life with Finland, the question arises of whether *I* connect my life with Finland or whether in some five years or so I will return to Latvia.

In addition to having an effect on personal well-being and life satisfaction, existing research has long suggested that the processes of acculturation may also result in changes to the acculturating individual's personality (Gillin and Raimy 1940; Güngör et al. 2013). They are further supported by recent longitudinal studies (Damian et al. 2019) that point to both stability and malleability of personality in adulthood. In the context of the current study, changes to the respondents' personality were not something that I set out to measure or explore. Instead, the topic emerged from the qualitative data, with many interviewees reporting changes that they connected to their move to (or to growing up as a member of minority in) Finland.

In general, interviewees described changes that aligned with 'ideals of Finnishness', such as becoming calmer, more reserved or less temperamental. Vera, for instance, described how living in Finland had made her more conscientious,

particularly when it came to values relating to nature, often seen as central to the Finnish national consciousness. At the same time, people with what were viewed as more 'Finnish' personality traits could be seen as having an advantage in adapting to life in Finland to begin with. Kira had noticed this with relation to her parents:

> I feel like my mum has always been pretty calm by her nature. And so she doesn't have any [trouble] but dad, he's maybe a little... he hasn't changed, so with him you definitely do notice [laughs], you'll know that he's not Finnish [laughs].

On the other hand, interviewees were not always certain whether the changes they described had occurred as a consequence of migration or due to some other factor. Jelena, who at the time of our interview was approaching her 70th birthday, wondered if the changes she had observed and attributed to the positive influence of Finland could simply be a consequence of getting older.

> Of course, I think that Finland has had a positive effect on me. I've started worrying less about small things. [—] In my soul, I used to be very worried about this, that, work, I had to be doing everything right. Now I've become calmer... I think it's had a good effect on me. Or maybe it's the age. It's difficult to say.

While most of the changes mentioned by the interviewees were viewed by them in a positive light, some were more ambivalent or even negative. Tamara felt that Finland had changed her into 'a lone wolf'. Maria said that her experiences in Finland had made her stronger, but also 'harder'. For Maksim, who had not been able to find a job corresponding to his education and previous work experience, the biggest change had occurred with relation to how he viewed himself and his professional ambitions and abilities:

> I'm already 40 years old, I won't have time to... it's not important for me anymore to earn something for myself at work. [–] When I was young, I believed that I could become a great scientist, to make discoveries... I don't want to deceive myself any longer.

Maksim's situation is quite common among both Russian-speakers and other minorities, who often end up working in jobs that do not correspond to their education or previous work experience. I will discuss other challenges of adaptation in the next section.

5.6 Challenges of adaptation

During the fieldwork in Finland it emerged that the challenges reported by members of the Russian-speaking minority could be broadly divided into five categories. First are the personal problems not necessarily directly related to

one's status and position as a member of minority (such as divorce or health problems).[4] The second category includes challenges and inconveniences related to the process of migration – both practical, such as the renewal of the residence permit, and social, such as missing one's 'previous life' (an expression sometimes used by the interviewees) or having to arrange care for older relatives in the previous country of residence.

As opposed to the first two categories, the last three relate more directly to life in Finland. The third category includes practical challenges, such as learning the Finnish language and finding employment. The fourth has to do with the (lack of) social relationships in Finland, a theme that I have already discussed above in section 5.5.3 and will return to again in the next chapter. The fifth category includes experiences of othering, racism, and discrimination, all of which will be discussed in chapter 7.

Each of these types of challenges could affect acculturation and adaptation in different, various ways. For example, as I will show in chapter 6, experiences of othering often affected the ways in which the acculturating individuals felt willing or able to identify. Bureaucracy relating to the migration process could affect people's close relationships, but also employment and education, as explained by Anton:

> When changing resident permits, you are not able to leave Finland. Or if you leave, you will not be able to come back. I waited for [a renewal of] a visa for 6 moths and was not able to leave Finland for all that time. In the end I was getting worried, because I had to leave for a conference, and it was really last minute.

In Anton's case, his main worry was related to potentially being unable to attend an important conference, which could have negatively affected his career. For others, not being able to leave Finland while the renewal of their visa was being processed also meant being separated from their family for extended periods of time. Unsurprisingly, the insecurity relating to some of the migration processes could be a source of much anxiety and stress for the research participants, particularly in cases where elderly parents or grandparents depended on the frequent visits of their Finland-based family members or when a threat of deportation was present (see chapter 9).

As with acculturation in general, personal circumstances and resources also affected how people were able to deal with the challenges they encountered. For instance, when it comes to legal status and freedom of movement, those who hold a Finnish citizenship - or that of another EU country, such as Estonia - are often in a privileged position compared to those who are citizens of Russia or another non-EU state. The diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, focusing on identity and belonging.

[4] It should be noted, however, that the process of migration or the experience of being in a minority can, among other consequences, have an effect on one's health and personal relationships. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 9.

5.7 Conclusions

This chapter has discussed the individual acculturation and adaptation of Finland's Russian-speakers, the role of moderating factors in this process, as well as the difficulties that sometimes arise. It suggests that we should broaden our view of what acculturation entails, centring social and psychological domains instead of the language, culture learning and employment often highlighted in the official integration programmes (see Bodström 2020).

Moreover, if we truly accept the idea of acculturation as a bi- or multilinear construct (see chapter 2), accessing the acculturation of individuals on the basis of how well they fit into the 'receiving society' is an insufficient approach: we must consider that tasks of acculturation may be just as or more importantly about the maintenance or conservation of 'heritage' cultures as it is about adapting to the social realities of the country one lives in.

Although decisions related to migration are often presented as conscious, carefully considered choices guided by a pull and push factors, this was not the case for a large part of the respondents. Even those who had made the decision themselves often recalled having doubts about it, and these doubts and consideration continued in the post-migration stage (see also White 2017).

By contrast, the narratives of Finland-raised interviewees have shown that what they find challenging is not the reconciliation of two or more cultures, but the ambient pressure for monoculture that often encourages or forces them to 'choose between' their countries and cultures. This is particularly true for those who identify with both Russia and Finland, presumably for reasons discussed in chapter 4.

The interviews suggest that one potential consequence of such pressure, particularly when felt from 'both sides', is the adaptation of an acculturation strategy that has often been grouped together with marginalisation but that would be better described as 'cosmopolitanism' (see for instance Cohen 2011): distancing oneself from both the culture or origin and the receiving society in favour of a more global outlook not centring ethnicity or nationality. While markedly similar to marginalisation in some ways, it seems that, like hypothesized by Sam and Berry (2016), this cosmopolitan strategy does not come with similar negative consequences for well-being.

Finally, while researchers studying cross-cultural encounters have long challenged the traditional ideas of acculturation as assimilation and highlighted the idea of integration as a two-way street (Berry 2021, Ward 2008; see chapter 2), both representatives of the receiving society and, as the interviews in this chapter have shown, acculturating individuals themselves often place the responsibility for the 'success of adaptation' on the shoulders of migrants and other minority members.

Chapter 6

Identity and Belonging

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore identity constructions and feelings of belonging among Russian-speakers living in Finland. During both data collection and analysis I often encountered the problem described by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) and discussed in chapter 2: the concept of identity was employed in so many differing ways and in such various contexts as to render it to the brink of meaninglessness. Due to the ubiquity of identity discourses in the material and the many different shades within them, it will not be possible for me to do justice to all of the numerous identity-related themes found in the data. In the writing of this chapter, I have thus prioritised themes that are important for answering my research questions, provide new information, or help challenge our existing understandings of identities of Russian-speakers.

The chapter will show that Russian-speakers identify with a wide selection of ethnic, national and supranational groups. It also indicates that, while Russian language and certain cultural markers perceived as Russian (such as literature, art, and hospitality) are of central importance to many if not most Russian-speakers, they are not necessarily related to identification with (ethnic or national) Russianness.

In the light of the extensive recent scholarship on hybrid and supranational identifications (see chapter 2), this may not seem like an important finding. However, it challenges the idea of Russian-speakers (and other 'stigmatised' minorities) as stuck with the limited identity options, particularly popular shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union. For instance, in 1996 Kolstø (p. 613) suggested that 'the Russian diaspora' was facing three identity choices: 'identification with the dominant culture in the external homeland (= Russia); development of a new but still basically Russian self-understanding; and identification with the dominant culture in the state of residence'.[1] Instead, as the chapter will show,

[1]It should be noted that Kolstø himself (1996, p. 613) reminded the reader of the need for caution in making such predictions, pointing out that identity formation 'is a protracted

all three processes of identification can take place simultaneously and, importantly, ethnic and national loyalties can be completely or partly abandoned in favour of supranational - or none.

The chapter will focus on ethnic, national and supranational identities, which often become highlighted in the public discourse on the Russian-speaking minorities and were frequently foregrounded also by the research participants themselves. Yet it should be noted that these were by no means the only nor, in many cases, even the main significant identities in the participants' accounts. As I will show in this chapter, other identities - particularly those relating to profession, education and political worldviews - were often used in constructing difference within the Russian-speaking community. Moreover, the ethnic, national and supranational identifications were themselves constructed in the lived realities where ethnicity and nationality mix with age, gender, ability, migration status, sexuality, class and socioeconomic status, to mention but a few factors. This highlights the need for an intersectional, relational approach to acculturation.

6.2 How do Finland's Russian-speakers identify?

6.2.1 Russians, but not only - the diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community

The internal heterogeneity of Finland's Russian-speaking community and the fact that not all Russian-speakers identify as Russians was discussed in some detail in chapter 4. The data I collected further confirmed this diversity: both the interviews and the survey reveal a large variety of self-identifications among the research participants. Overall, the participants disclosed over 30 different ethnic, national or supranational identities, as well as various combinations of them.

And yet, this high level of diversity did not signify a lack of Russian and/or Finnish identifications. Russianness was the most commonly disclosed ethnic/national identity among the participants, with 75 percent of the survey respondents saying they felt 'somewhat', 'quite a bit' or 'very much' Russian. The same numbers for 'Finnish' and 'Ingrian Finnish', were circa 35 and 19 percent, while the other options - 'Estonian', 'Ukrainian' and 'Other' - were considerably less common at 3, 5 and 7 percent, respectively.[2]

These numbers can also be approached from another perspective: they suggest that a sizeable minority of Russian-speakers do not identify as Russian. Notably, the survey sample only included respondents whose native language is marked as Russian in the population registry; it can be assumed that the

process, spanning decades and generations' and suggesting that any attempts at forecast 'will necessarily be somewhat speculative'.

[2]If we include the responses of those who chose the option 'a little', the share of 'Russian' grows to 85, 'Finnish' to 50, 'Ingrian Finnish' to 23, 'Estonian' to 4, 'Ukrainian' to 9 and 'Other' to 8 percent.

share is at least as high if not higher among 'unofficial' Russian-speakers. This is an important finding in the light of the common discourse that confounds Russian-speakers and Russianness; in fact, it is not surprising that the tendency to categorise all native speakers of Russian as Russians was one of the most frequent 'complaints' I heard from interviewees both during this research and during my previous fieldwork in Finland (Tuhkanen 2013).

At the same time, it is interesting to compare the number of those who identify as Russians to those who, in a previous question, indicated that their family background was partly or fully Russian (65 percent): the difference suggests that Russian identity is open also to those respondents who have no Russian parentage. This may be partly explained by the 'two levels of Russianness', discussed in section 2.3.4, and the conceptual and practical closeness of ethnic and national identities, reviewed in the same chapter. Another potential explanation is that being viewed as Russians by the Finnish majority had prompted also those Russian-speakers who did not consider themselves to have (ethnic) Russian parentage to identity as Russians - a topic that I will return to in chapter 7.

6.2.2 Cosmopolitans and citizens of the world - multiple, hybrid, and supranational identities

One of the most interesting findings from the survey is that 107 people, nearly half of all respondents, reported identifying with more than one ethnic group.[3] Among interviewees, who had the chance to elaborate on their identities, such identifications were even more common.

Notably, there was diversity within this diversity. Some participants identified with, for example, 'Russianess' and 'Finnishness' as separate entities, while others described their ethnocultural identities in hybrid terms, where the identity (for instance, 'Finno-Russian') is created in the interaction of its parts. It can be questioned to what extent the distinctions between multiple and hybrid (such as 'Russian and Finnish' versus 'Finno-Russian') reflect actual differences in participants' understanding of their own identities (rather than linguistic preferences). In any case, many accounts of hybrid and multiple belongings highlighted the context-dependant, relational nature of identifications, with interviewees reporting that their 'other' identities became activated in Finland, and Finnish ones when abroad. This often reflected the ways in which they were seen by people around them. While some 'multicultural' respondents seemed to cherish this ambiguity and only reported experiencing negative feelings in situations where there was strong ambient pressure for disambiguation, others said that 'always being the other' could be weary.

Highlighting the importance of supranational identities was one common solution to this weariness (see Kunst and Sam 2013). Identifying as a European

[3]In addition to the ethnocultural diversity of the Russian-speaking minority the finding likely reflects the fact that, as discussed in chapter 3, the survey questionnaire was designed to explicitly allow for multiple identifications.

or a citizen of the world made it possible to challenge the centrality of ethno-cultural boundaries while at the same time retaining the feeling of belonging to a community. This community was not based on ethnic or national markers - reliance on which many interviewees saw as outdated and exclusionary - but on a shared set of universal values, such as equality, tolerance, and anti-racism (see chapter 7).

In fact, supranational identities were very common among the participants: two thirds of survey respondents said they thought of themselves as somewhat, quite a bit, or very much European, and nearly as many felt part of the Russian-speaking world. Identifying as citizens of the world was also very common, with over half of respondents choosing this option.[4] Table 6.1 provides examples of different types of multiple, hybrid, and supranational identifications encountered during fieldwork.

Multiple	**Hybrid**	**Supranational**
Finnish, Ingrian and Russian	A Russian Finn	European
Ingrian Finnish and Russian	A Finn in Russia	Citizen of the World
Lithuanian and Ingrian	A Finnish-speaking Russian	Soviet
Ingrian Finnish and Finnish	Finno-Russian	Part of the Russian-speaking world

Figure 6.1: Examples of multiple, hybrid and supranational identities disclosed by interviewees and survey participants

When discussing multiple identities in the context of Finland's Russian-speakers, it is important to consider to what extent the somewhat ambiguous relationship between Finnishness and Ingrian Finnishness affects the results. In contemporary Finnish public discourse, the two are often constructed as separate ethnic groups, due largely to the latter's (presumed) connections with Russianness (see Prindiville and Hjelm 2018). At the same time, many Ingrian Finnish interviewees themselves viewed (or, in any case, had viewed - see chapter 7) their 'Ingrian' as a sub-identity of 'Finnish', similar to Helsinkian or Savonian. Against this background, it can be challenged whether the combination of 'Ingrian Finnish and Finnish' should be read as an example of multiple (ethnic) identities, or rather as two levels - regional and ethnic - of what is in essence the same identity.

In fact, the role of regional and local identities should not be ignored: for some, they were more important than ethnic or national ones. Notably, the local level was often presented as being in interaction with the global. For example, Laura, who at the time of our interview studied abroad in a large Western European city, said that the multicultural environment and 'normalisation of

[4]By contrast, Soviet and Asian identities were not as widespread: one third of respondents strongly, very strongly or somewhat thought of themselves as Soviet, and only five percent as Asian.

difference' in her new home allowed her to escape the 'pressures of nationalism'. Similarly, a number of interviewees mentioned St. Petersburg as a cosmopolitan city, so that their understanding of themselves as Peterburgians was closely tied to their view of themselves as citizens of the world.

These interactions between local and global could be seen as giving birth to a type of a glocal identity (see Torkington 2012) based on the interplay of identifying with a place and identifying as a citizen of the world. Interestingly, the interviews suggest that both the city and the world are often seen as more inclusive and consequently 'purer' forms of loyalties, free from the homogenising and exclusionary tendencies of the nation-states and carefully bounded ethnic groups.

6.2.3 Who am I? Essentialist and non-essentialist identifications

For some participants, conceptualising their belonging in terms of hybrid or supranational identifications was a conscious choice. For others, it stemmed from their lived realities or multicultural family histories and were, in some sense, almost inevitable. Consider, for instance, the following survey response to a question about identity:

> I am most likely a Soviet person! I love everyone. Russians, and Finns, and everyone else! My husband is Tatar. My mum was in a Soviet orphanage since she was three years old. [–] My grandfather was born [in a small town in central Finland] and in 1918 he fled to St. Petersburg, Petrograd[5] [–] I was born in 195[x] in the city of Sortavala, I don't know the Finnish language, but my mother knew it very well, although at home we always spoke Russian. I am writing all this so that you could understand that I am a special case, in Sortavala they called me a Finn and here they say that I am Russian - so who am I [вот кто я]?

The question posed by the respondent - who am I? - was repeated in many accounts. While speaking of a full-fetched crisis of identity may be an exaggeration, and risks pathologising identities that challenge the primordial idea(l)s of ethnicity, the data suggests that identifying with more than one ethnic or national group was not always straightforward in a world which often demands disambiguation. This theme was particularly common in the accounts of those who had multiethnic and -cultural family backgrounds and, as illustrated by the respondent above, often related to experiences of being perceived or even explicitly designated as 'the other' in both/all societies - an important theme

[5] Thousands of so-called 'red' Finns fled to Soviet Russia during and after the Finnish civil war, which took place in 1918. As mentioned above, not all Russian-speaking 'co-ethnic' return migrants to Finland are Ingrian Finns, the children and grandchildren of these 'red' refugees being one example of this.

that I touched upon in the previous chapter and will return to again in the next one.[6]

On the other hand, multicultural background did not always correlate with hybrid or multiple identifications. This becomes visible when comparing the responses of the open-ended survey questions about respondents' and their parents' ethnicity. The data shows that respondents sometimes described themselves with clear-cut, singular nominators even when the following questions revealed the multicultural background of their parents. For instance, as illustrated by table 6.2, respondents often identified as 'only' Russian even when one or both of their parents had no (ethnic) Russian background. Thus, someone with Ukrainian parents, or a Roma mother and a Russian Jewish father, could think of him- or herself as 'simply Russian', at least when questioned about it in a survey. This suggests that, at least in the post-Soviet context, ethnic identities - even the seemingly clear-cut ones - are not always based on family background, 'blood ties' or assumptions of biological or genetic commonality, factors that often form the backbone of the essentialist understanding of identities (Storrs 1999; Tenenbaum and Davidman 2007).

Respondent	**Mother**	**Father**
Russian	Russian	Greek
Russian	Roma	Russian Jewish
Russian	Ukrainian	Ukrainian
Russian	Russian officially, the real ethnic background is not known	Unknown
Russian	Russian	Jewish
Russian	Russian	Komi
Russian	Ukrainian	Russian

Figure 6.2: Examples of the ethnic background of selected survey respondents and their parents, as reported by the respondent

The table further sheds light on three interesting findings. Firstly, it suggests that the diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community goes far beyond the Russian/Finnish dichotomy in terms of which it is most often conceptualised. It is not just that the community is diverse in itself, in the sense that it includes people of different ethnic or national backgrounds (Protassova and Tuhkanen 2003), but also that the ethnic and national background of individual members of the community is often hybrid and mixed.

[6]In some cases, such accounts may have reflected the interviewees' own comparisons of their different reference groups (for instance, feeling Russian among Finns and Finnish among Russian-speakers), similarly to how hearing about the discrimination my interviewees had faced due to their accents had made me feel more aware of my position as a native Finnish-speaker and, consequently, an outsider with relation to their experiences (see section 3.7; see also Emirbayer 1997). More often, however, they seemed to have been brought about by the gaze of others, or rather the othering gaze, a theme which I will develop in chapter 7.

Secondly, it illustrates that, as mentioned above, people with bi- or multi-ethnic backgrounds may identify with a single ethnic group - or at least 'simplify' their ethnic background in this way when asked about it in a survey. Consequently, hybridity or multiplicity of ethnic and national identities does not necessarily follow from the hybridity or multiplicity of parentage, and vice versa. A lot of academic research - this work included - has parted from the understanding that hybridity has increased in recent years. Perhaps in reality what has increased, or at least what has increased more notably, is *identification* with hybridity where it has previously been (and to an extent still continues to be) masked in favour of less ambiguous identifications (see e.g. Storrs 1999).

Finally, the table once again shows that identification as a Russian is not necessarily tied to ethnic parentage. As pointed out above, the ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds Russian-speakers often do not preclude identification with Russianness. Consider, for instance, the example of an interviewee born in Lugansk, Eastern Ukraine. The interviewee, who had moved to Russia at the age of seven and to Finland as a grown-up, described his father as being 'from Karelia' and his mother 'as half Cossack, half Russian'. One of his grandmothers had been an orphan, so the family did not know her ethnic background for certain, but assumed it to be Jewish. Both the interviewee's ethnic background and residence history were decidedly multicultural and -national. Yet he said that he thought of himself as 'probably Russian', adding that 'overall, "Russian" is like "American". It's not so much a nationality as... I don't even know what'.

As the above comment shows, in some cases Russianness could be constructed almost as a *supranational* rather than an ethnic or a national identity. This is one of the reasons why, as briefly discussed in chapter 2, the common division between ethnic and national identities (wherein ethnic refers to the 'heritage group' and national to the identification with the receiving society) does not always work in case of Russian-speaking minorities.

So far, this section has highlighted identifications that renounce or challenge essentialist understandings of ethnicity. At the same time, it has to be noted that research participants often spoke of ethnic and national identities, particularly their own, in essentialist terms. Many used words such as *of course* and *naturally* when describing their identities and connected certain characteristics or traits with certain ethnic or national groups. Jelena, for instance, said she had understood why her (Ingrian Finnish) husband acted in certain ways after they moved to Finland, linking certain character traits to his Finnishness:

> I was always amazed by my husband. At times, it was killing me, you could say [laughs]. For instance, I say something needs to be done, I feel like hop, quickly, well you know the way it usually is with Russians. He will think - I'm already getting angry - think and think, only then get up and do it. You understand, the slowness in decisions, the thoroughness in thinking things through. Am I right? [laughs] That's the way it is. Here, I got it. We were sitting once, I told him: Finally I understand you, why you are the way you are.

It's a national trait. [laughs]

Sometimes, essentialist understandings were also reflected in accounts of relationships between different groups. This often happened when talking about discrimination - for instance, as I will discuss in chapter 7, some interviewees presented Finns having prejudice against Russian(-speaker)s as 'natural' - but also in other circumstances. Take, for example, Galya's account of what happened after she asked her Soviet history teacher a question about the persecution of Ingrian Finns:

> After that [this teacher wrote me and my friend] such bad references that we couldn't get into the institute... So I went back to the school, it was summer already, and our headteacher was Estonian. And naturally he wrote me a good reference. He changed it all [laughs].

By saying that the Estonian principal 'naturally' wrote her a good reference, Galya alludes to solidarity between Estonians and (Ingrian) Finns. That there is a special relationship between the two nations - based on the widely shared understanding of their shared history as well as the common idea of Finland and Estonia as 'brother nations' - is seen as so instinctive that it does not need further explanations.

6.2.4 'I'm not a nationalist' - challenging the centrality of ethnic and national identities

One essentialist assumption about ethnic groups is that everyone identifies with one. The qualitative fieldwork suggests that this is not necessarily the case. The survey provided more evidence for this: 13 percent of the respondents indicated that they feel they do not belong to any ethnic or national group. For some, the terms themselves seemed to hold negative connotations. As one respondent wrote in response to a question about ethnic identity: 'It doesn't matter - I'm not a nationalist!.'

Notably, some of these respondents nevertheless also indicated that they do, at least to some extent, identify with one or more of the groups listed in the same question. At a first glance, this may seem contradictory, but a similar sense of ambiguity between belonging 'nowhere' and belonging to more than one nation or ethnic group also emerged in several interviews. Take, for example, the following passage from Kira's interview:

> It's really difficult because I don't feel like I'm from any country because no, I don't feel like I'm a Finn, but then if I go to Belarus I don't feel like I'm quite Belarusian either ... I'm just me, and I can't, like... I somehow can't, I can't define it. Or maybe I am both.

In fact, this ambiguity characterised many of the identity descriptions I heard during the fieldwork. Being 'Finnish', 'Russian', or part of any other ethnic or

national group rarely appeared as completely straightforward and unambiguous in the accounts of the interviewees. Even for those who found it relatively easy to define their identity, there was often a 'but' waiting at the end of the sentence:

> I usually say that I'm Russian, but Baltic Russians differ from Russian Russians [laughs].

Misha was not the only one to point out the differences between the various types of 'Russians' and Russian-speakers. The next sections will discuss the flexible ways in which some interviewees identified or disidentified with the Russian language and Russian-speaking communities. They will also look at the construction of difference within Finland's Russian-speaking minority.

6.3 Discourses of belonging and disbelonging: Russian language and Russian-speaking communities

6.3.1 'He's one of ours, he speaks Russian' - Russian language as an identity marker

Regardless of their age, gender, ethnic identity, migratory background, or political opinions, nearly all interviewees brought up the importance of Russian language in their lives and their willingness to preserve it for the future generations. This is very similar to the findings of my previous fieldwork among Finland's Russian-speakers (Tuhkanen 2013), and also concurs with other studies that have found that Russian language can act as an important unifying factor for people from many different backgrounds (Denman 2021).

Whilst this may seem like an obvious finding in a study explicitly focusing on Russian-speakers, three aspects of this tendency to highlight the centrality of language are particularly noteworthy. Firstly, those who identified as (ethnic) Russians usually viewed language as an integral part of this identity, often beyond (other) ethnic markers, such as ancestry. Secondly, Russian language was often cherished also by those who did not identify with (other forms of) Russianness. Thirdly, and in relation to the two previous points, language was sometimes used as a way of demarcating between 'us' and 'them'.

The importance assigned to language was visible in the accounts, common among Finland-raised interviewees, that expressed fear of 'forgetting' the Russian language. Most often, the word forgetting was used in a very lax sense to mean even slight (perceived) deterioration in vocabulary or grammar. A number of interviewees for whom Russian was not their strongest language mentioned that speaking and writing correctly and 'beautifully' was highly valued in Russian-speaking countries and/or among their Russian-speaking families, which some felt was discouraging (as they feared they could not reach the expected level) while other said added to their determination to preserve native-level fluency.

An even more common theme was the significance given to retaining and passing the language forward for future generations - a goal in which many respondents were willing to invest a lot of time and other resources. For Maria, the very idea of losing Russian was painful, so much so that she compared it to the 'mistake' committed in the Soviet Union, where her Finnish family had gradually stopped using their native language. Even though in Maria's case, Russian was not the native language of her parents nor the first language that she had learnt in childhood, it was the language closest to her, and the one she had wanted to pass on to her child.

Despite the importance ascribed to Russian language in almost all accounts, few interviewees used the term '*Russian-speaker'* to describe themselves. It would often happen that, after I would mention the term, the interviewee would repeat it once or twice in their answer, but then return to using another qualifier, such as '*Russian*', later on. In fact, respondents were not always clear on what Russian-speaking meant ('do you mean, from any country?'). Others found the term somewhat unnatural. Vera, a graduate student who had moved to Finland from St. Petersburg in her mid-20s, said that she would not expect to hear the word used among her friends:

> It would be more common, you know, to hear 'he's one of ours, he speaks Russian'.[7] You know, for example, I have a friend from Latvia, he lived all his life in Latvia, but he speaks Russian, I perceive him as 'our person' [наш человек].

Interestingly, Cheskin (2013, p. 293) has noted a similar unease around and even disapproval of the term *Russian speaker* among his interviewees in Latvia. During the fieldwork I did often wonder whether I had chosen the best word to describe the community that I study, given how few of the research participants seemed to use it independently. At the same time, for some participants distinguishing between Russian language and (other forms of) Russianness was of great importance. As one survey respondent, who described herself as a Russian-speaking Ukrainian, wrote in an English-language email to me:

> [I]n Finland it is often forgotten that not all Russian-speaking people are actually Russian by blood or by passport. There are Russian-speaking Ukrainians, Armenians, Georgians, Jewish, etc. and their believes, experiences and preferences differ a lot from Russians.

Vera's account of commonality that transcends borders and is based on common language is reminiscent of Laitin's (1995, 1998) description of a Russian-language nationality. The prevalence of such a nationality has been questioned: for instance, Cheskin and Kachuyevski (2019) have suggested that the centrality of Russian language as an identity marker for Russian-speaking minorities varies by country.

With relation to this, I found two different themes in the data. Firstly, as discussed above, research participants would often strongly identify with

[7] Да он наш, он по-русски говорит.

the Russian language. Secondly, a communal identity of Russian-speakers as a group of people seemed noticeably less strong, and relationships between Russian-speakers in Finland were often presented as unfavourable. Perhaps counterintuitively, interviewees seemed to identify more with a global community of Russian-speakers than with the Russian-speaking community in Finland. This was also reflected in the survey: the mean for feeling part of the Russian-speaking world (M = 3.41, SD = 1.21) was higher than the mean for feeling part of Finland's Russian-speaking community (M = 2.88, SD = 1.25). I will develop these themes in the next section.

6.3.2 Who counts as us? A community of Russian-speakers

During my fieldwork and the subsequent analysis I often came across words and concepts that I felt were difficult – sometimes nearly impossible – to translate into English. One such example is the term 'свой' [svoi], which gained interesting symbolic meanings in the accounts of many interviewees. In short, свой [svoi] can be translated as 'one's own'. As discussed above, Vera used it to describe her feeling of commonality with someone from Latvia, Belarus, or Ukraine:

> A couple of guys from Belarus studied with me, they are the same... our same own guys [те же самые свои вот родные ребята]. We have a girl from Ukraine at the graduate school, I don't perceive her as 'she is from Ukraine', I just perceive it like, yes, here is a Russian speaker with our same background, with the same values and everything... I know that a person may come from another Russian-speaking country, like Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus... But still, for me this is like my own person [свой человек]... in the sense that here are the same understandable values, you debate in the same way, talk in the same way... So, for me, there probably isn't any particular difference in this regard.

The meaning of *свой* [svoi] is in many ways intangible, and, while she mentioned the shared value system, shared language and shared ways of thinking, Vera found it difficult to pinpoint what exactly made the people she described 'her own'. Natalia, in turn, connected the commonalities among Russian-speakers to the 'catastrophe of the Soviet Union', the trauma of which, she believed, people from all Post-Soviet countries carried with them:

> Our acquaintances from Ukraine come here to pick berries, and it turns out that we have so many everyday habits in common! How we always try to save money, the things that we like... all of these Soviet tendencies, we retain them. So I call myself Russian, but it would probably be more just to say that I am a Soviet person by culture and upbringing, no matter how sad that is.

Of course, the meaning of свой [svoi] and other words denoting groupness was contextual and changed from one situation to another. While at times it could

be used to refer to all post-Soviet nations or the global Russphone diaspora, at others it would be restricted to regional level or to one's immediate family and friend group. Sometimes, the two levels seemed to be related. Many of the interviewees who highlighted the commonality of Russian-speakers in different countries or spoke of the Russophone diaspora as a (global) community had family members or 'roots' in more than one post-Soviet country. For instance, while Vera herself had grown up in St. Petersburg, her grandparents lived in Ukraine, where she visited them every summer.

On the other hand, some interviews suggest that having positive feelings towards a group was not necessarily a prerequisite for feeling a sense of commonality or of 'being in the same boat' with them. Consider, for instance, the different ingroups and outgroups present in the following extract:

> They don't like the Balts, Russians. When we got off [the plane] in Moscow, all of us with Lithuanian passports were taken aside. We were standing there together with those Tajiks. With Finnish passports, it's much easier. I think that of the Soviet mentality, how all our life we were bowing before foreigners, all the best always to foreigners, something has remained. So when you go [to Russia] with a Finnish passport, they look at you differently.

At first the interviewee, who had no Russian parentage and did not identify as Russian, says that Russians don't like the Balts. In this sentence, 'us' refers to those with Lithuanian passports, presented in opposition to the Russians. Yet later, when talking about how something of a Soviet mentality has remained in Russia, she uses 'we' to include herself in the midst of those bowing before the foreigners. Note, also, the difference between the Lithuanians and the Finns: travelling with a Finnish passport secures better treatment because a Finn qualifies as a foreigner, while a Lithuanian (or a Tajik) does not. This explanation is particularly interesting because it is not necessary - the observation that Russians 'don't like the Balts' could, in itself, be sufficient for explaining why she receives better treatment when travelling on her Finnish passport as compared to the Lithuanian one. In explaining the (perceived) difference through the prism of us/them, the interviewee implies that Lithuanians and Russians share something with each other that they do not share with Finns - a feeling similar to that expressed by Vera, albeit here presented in a considerably less positive light.

There are several, sometimes ambiguous and conflicting layers of 'us' and 'them' in the above account. This was characteristic of many interviews. For instance, Anya told me that she felt 'more comfortable' interacting with fellow Russian-speakers, regardless of which country they came from, positing that ethnic or national differences did not matter to her. Yet on the regional level, differences seemed to gain significance:

> Well, in Moscow [laughs] there's even... The same things have different names. For instance, [—] a Muscovite would say that you go to a shop and buy a *bulka* of bread. In Piter, they will look at you and

> say "WHAT? What bulka of bread?" You don't say that. You have to say like Pitertsy: *baton* [laughs]. Here, I've had contact with a girl from Moscow, I've visited her at home. And she has a Muscovite style of life. If you go to Moscow, there's... it's very specific.
>
> [interviewer] What does it mean, a Muscovite style of life?
>
> It's very different. [—] In Piter, you have certain rules. In Moscow, it's very different.

While local or regional differences were also mentioned by a number of other interviewees, this was not the primary way of constructing difference within the Russian-speaking community. More commonly, distinctions were built around education, cultural taste, and political opinions. I will discuss this in the next section.

6.3.3 Artists from St. Petersburg and tractor drivers from Siberia: constructing difference within the Russian-speaking minority

Research suggest that minority members often seek social connections among co-ethnics or co-nationals. Moreover, community can reinforce an individual's sense of identity (Delanty 2009, p. 122). In fact, it has been argued that in some countries, such as the Baltic states, 'belonging to a community of Russian speakers has become one of the most important identifiers and markers of identity' (Cheskin 2013, p. 287, drawing on Cheskin 2010).

While Russian-speakers I interviewed did socialise with other Russian-speakers and highly valued both Russian language and the 'Russian-style friendship' (see chapter 5), I did not observe a strong tendency for identifying with Finland's Russian-speaking community. Some interviewees questioned whether such a community existed in the first place.[8] Many, like Maria, pointed to what they believed was a lack solidarity among Russian-speakers:

> Based on my observations, Russians are an astonishing nation. They can cry for their homeland, but they, well, if I may say so, they don't really like those Russians who are here next to them.

A number of interviewees recognised these tendencies within themselves.

> For me, if I hear people speaking in Russian I... I run from them, to be honest. That is, I don't try to get to know them. There was a reason why I left Russia, and this reason is probably why I don't want to socialise with these people, with Russians, because I think that the kind of people that have come to Finland are for the most part precisely the kind of people that I would not be friends with in Russia.

[8] In fact, in addition to sometimes wondering whether 'Russian-speakers' was the best term to use, I also wondered whether the use of 'community' was justified (see also Malyutina 2015).

> Sometimes you avoid [other Russian-speakers]. You hear negative things. They have a more negative view on life in Finland. My pretensions are quite minor, and they might relate to migration policies, I think Finland should have a merit-based migration system such as Canada so that it would be easier for highly educated people to come. [– Among Russian-speakers t]here are many Ingrian Finns. These people will never get a high-paid job, and their input to the economy is highly questionable.

The perceived lack of solidarity among Russian-speakers living in Finland was a theme that repeated throughout the interviews. Some compared the situation to that of other countries with large Russian-speaking minorities. For instance, several interviewees noted that they felt 'envious' of Russian-speakers in the Baltic States, particularly Estonia, where (they suggested) Russian language culture was more developed and there was a deeper feeling of community, of 'togetherness'. Tamara, for instance, said she dreamt of moving to the Baltic states because of the active Russian-speaking life there. Galya, who had grown up in Estonia, said she felt Russian-speakers in Finland were boring and frequently travelled to Tallinn to meet friends and take part in various events there.

Interviewees also contrasted the lack of activity and solidarity among Russian-speakers in Finland with that of other minorities in the country. Evgenia said that she had noticed a clear difference in attitudes between Russian(-speaker)s and members of other minority groups when it came to attitudes towards 'their own'.

> Take for example Arabs, if they see each other, they are more... how to put it... they are closer to each other, they have diasporas, yes, they are so friendly... Russians, though, when they see another Russian, right, they go...
>
> [Evgenia's husband:] They hear Russian speech and they tense up [laughs]
>
> [Evgenia:] Yes, yes, yes. [–] It's strange, but it is like that. And somehow you wonder, why is it like that, that Russians themselves [do this], right. [–] That you have this attitude towards your own. You'd think you'd have to do the opposite, support each other. That's why I like our [religious] meetings, that we somehow have a different type of attitude between Russians there, friendly and amicable.

Previous research provides some support for Evgenia's observation about Russian-speakers having a more negative view towards their ingroup than some other minority groups in Finland. For instance, in their study examining the negotiations of cultural citizenship in discussions of the majority and certain minority groups, Varjonen et al. (2018) identified two discursive patterns: the

first focused on conforming to mainstream culture as the responsibility of minority members, while the second actively challenged the norm of conformity and emphasised minority rights. The Russian-speaking study participants often highlighted the first pattern. This was in contrast with Somali-speaking participants, who were more active in challenging the expectations placed on minority groups (but concurred with the discourse employed by members of the Estonian-speaking minority).

On the other hand, the view that such discourses or divisions are unique to Russian-speakers *in Finland* is challenged by studies conducted among the Russophone diasporas in other countries. For example, studying Russian-speaking communities in London and Amsterdam, Kopnina (2002) found that very few of her interviewees felt part of a Russian-speaking community in either city. Rohde-Abuba (2017) noticed that Russian-speaking au pairs in Germany presented other Russian-speakers as a distinctive, homogeneous group from which they often distanced themselves through emphasising, for instance, their individuality, language skills, education, and ambition. Voutira (2004, pp. 537-538), in turn, has described how different generations of ethnic Greek return migrants from the (former) Soviet Union voice their disillusionment with the new Russian-speaking migrants, sometimes describing them as lazy and ungrateful. The topic of ungratefulness of the 'newer generations' also emerged during my analysis: for instance, one interviewee who had moved to Finland in the 1990s said that she 'felt bad for Finland' when the more recent Russian-speaking migrants 'complained about everything', adding that 'the border is open' if they feel unsatisfied with life in Finland.

Moreover, this phenomenon does not seem to be restricted to Russian-speakers. White (2017, pp. 185-7) has made similar observations in her research on Polish migrants in the United Kingdom. Kubal and Dekker (2014) found that Cold War Ukraininan emigres to the UK and the Netherlands tended to distance themselves from more recent arrivals.

One reason used to explain this construction of differences in the case of Russian-speakers is the inner heterogeneity of many Russian-speaking communities (see Kopnina 2002). For instance, a FOC priest who had worked with Russian-speaking parishioners pointed out that 'Russians really are such a wide spectrum... there are artists from St. Petersburg and tractor drivers from Siberia, and everything in between'. The divisions had been visible also within the parish, he said:

> And many of the old Russian families weren't at all positive towards the Russian newcomers, goodness me. It was actually, in a way, a few active actors in the parish who themselves had a Russian-speaking background, perhaps still speaking Russian as their native language, who actively wanted to support and help the newcomers in the '90s. But there were *many* who did not want to have anything to do with them: we are Russian, they are Soviet [мы русские, они советские] was what some of them said.

Notably, many interviewees expressed strong critical views about other members of Finland's Russian-speaking community. When not linked to (lack of) gratitude, discussed above, and other expectations of how 'a good migrant' should behave (see chapter 7), this criticism usually centred around either the (presumed) political opinions of other Russian-speakers or their lack of culture (бескультурье). For Maksim, the two were closely linked:

> I don't like communicating with them. For the major part it's people who, how to put it... with whom I have nothing to discuss. Many watch Russian television, a lot of them like [the Russian president Vladimir] Putin. You don't have to talk about politics, of course. But most of these people don't read books. What are you going to talk about?

Yakov mentioned that some of his friendships had ended due to differences in political opinions:

> I have lost many friends because they love Putin, and I detest him. Because of that I'm no longer in contact with many people whom I used to know. Why would you keep in touch with people with whom you have no common ground?

The idea that other Russian-speakers 'love Putin' or support the politics of the Russian Federation was a common theme in the interviews. However, none of the interviewees openly expressed such support, and only two expressed opinions that could be read as positive descriptions of Putin (in both cases, with relation to how material quality of life in Russia had increased since the 1990s). There are several potential explanations for this mismatch, among them a) my sample is biased b) support for Putin among Russian-speakers is actually not as common as some interviewees suspected, and/or c) interviewees who did support Putin did not feel comfortable disclosing this to me, unlike those critical of him (see section 3.7).

The observations of other Russian-speakers as uneducated or uninterested in culture were also challenged by a recent study showing that over 80 percent of Russian-speakers agreed that 'art, such as music and literature' had a big role in their life, compared with just over 50 percent of the Finnish majority population (Pitkänen et al. 2019, pp. 58-59). In the same study (Pitkänen et al. 2019, p. 74), over 90 percent of Russian-speakers said that education was an important part of their personal identity; the only domain deemed more important was family. Notably, mother tongue came in third, with 90 percent of Russian-speaking respondents deeming it very or quite important; this provides further support for the findings discussed in section 6.3.1 above.

Whatever the reasons behind the 'lack of solidarity' described by some interviewees, it became clear during fieldwork that this was a phenomenon that many felt sharply. At the same time, it is important to avoid overemphasising the dissonance within the Russian-speaking community. As with the other topics discussed in this chapter, the participants' accounts of their fellow Russian-speakers

and the Russian-speaking community of Finland were often rich, versatile and multidimensional. Negative descriptions were more often than not counterbalanced with positive ones within the course of the same interview - sometimes even within the same sentence. Consider, for example, how themes of shame, annoyance, and affinity become mixed in Natalia's account of Russians:

> In a shop it can happen that from 100 metres you will recognise a Russian immediately, from the first glance. He hasn't told you anything yet, but you know everything about him already. That he is not happy with his life, that he has little money and wants to buy everything, that he feels foreign here, a person of third class, that he has complexes. If it's a man, he will be frowning. Unnecessary rudeness, all that. And yes, it happens that they annoy you so much, that you feel ashamed for how they behave, but they are your own, damn it! You're going to help them later at the check-out till if they have problems.

6.3.4 'Where "back at ours"? I'm from Latvia' - Russianness as a resource and a liability

The topic of shame, brought up by Natalia, was evident in some participants' descriptions of their identities. A number of interviewees mentioned that they did not want people to know that they were Russian.

> I am opposed to being positioned as Russian, because I have international experience. So when they ask me, for example, where I'm from, I'm always afraid to say that I'm from Russia. Because that's not only, that's not all that I am.

> Yes, probably, if someone asks me head-on, I would answer Russian, but I don't accentuate this question much. [–] Russian people don't want to admit to others that they are Russian. They won't primarily say anything about it, or they will think about it before saying it. Particularly in Finland... [–] No one's going to ask you what kind of a Russian you are, that is already too personal of a question, but simply saying Russian carries more negative than positive connotations.

This wish to hide one's identity, reflected in above accounts, can be seen as an attempt to distance oneself from the 'stigmatised nationality' of Russianness (Clarke 2014, p. 65). At the same time, there were nearly always parts of Russianness which the interviewees cherished and wanted to retain, even to highlight. As Vera described it:

> For me, there are probably moments in which I really like being Russian... in terms of culture, [–] erudition, maybe even some [–]

> sense of beauty or something like that, in terms of art, literature. That I like. I like being Russian in the sense that you are such a hospitable, open, warm person. But there are probably moments for which I feel... because of which I don't say with such pride that I am Russian. For example, the political situation, or the bribes and such.

Russian culture emerged as an important identity resource in accounts of many interviewees. In a difficult political situation, it provided an arena where interviewees could feel pride in their Russian(-speaking) heritage. Importantly, it was often cherished also by those who were otherwise critical of Russia or their fellow minority members. For example, while Maksim engaged in cultural boundary drawing with relation to other Russian-speakers living in Finland, he did not distance himself from the Russian culture. On the contrary, he said he hoped that his young son would 'maintain a lot of Russianness', because 'Russia has a huge culture, and you shouldn't forget about that'.

Culture could also be used to position Russian-speakers as 'good migrants'. Maria, for instance, said that she was certain that 'Russians' would bring many benefits to Finland because 'they are well-educated, cultured' and because their parents had since early childhood 'taken them to theatres and art exhibitions'.

In many interviews, Russianness emerged as a potential resource that can be drawn on when it is beneficial, but also abandoned when necessary. In certain situations, there were privileges to be gained from hiding one's Russianness or from pointing out that one was (a Russian-speaker, but) not a Russian. One example of such a situation was provided by Latvian-born Misha, who often visited Ukraine, where people sometimes picked up on his Russian accent.

> Sometimes it happened that people reacted [цеплялись] to my accent. There were even some men in military uniform. Well, they were just walking around. They were just... There was no negativity, but apparently they heard that I was talking with someone with, like, a Russian accent, and they went like: 'So, what are they saying about our situation back at yours [у вас там]?' I said: 'Where back at ours [где у нас]? I'm from Latvia.' It smooths things over straight away. If you say that you're from Latvia or Finland, there are no problems.

By pointing out that he was from Latvia, not from Russia, Misha positioned himself in a certain way and managed to 'smooth things over straight away'. While he had not found being questioned about his background scary, some interviewees pointed out that sometimes hiding one's ethnic background was necessary for safety considerations, such as avoiding racist encounters. As one young Russian-speaker I spoke with during the fieldwork put it:

> It goes without saying that I don't want to shout at any ice hockey match or such that, hey, by the way, there's a Russian here!

At the same time, it should be highlighted that the option of concealing one's ethnic or cultural background was not available to everyone. Accent, non-Finnish name and 'looking different', as defined by one interviewee, could all mean that hiding one's background would have been difficult if not impossible for some of the people I interviewed. Maria brought this up:

> I have it written on my face that I am Russian, because I speak like that. Even though everyone in my family is Finnish, so I don't know where I got this from. Probably, after all, it's about where you grow up. The struggle, the always having to do everything yourself, it's immediately evident when I start talking. [–] Therefore it's useless for me to try and pretend that I don't have Russian roots.

Maria, who came from a Finnish family and had arrived in Finland as a 'co-ethnic' return migrant in the early 1990's, feels that it is useless for her to try and deny that she has 'Russian roots' - even though, by her own admission, there are no Russians in her family, only (Ingrian) Finns. This once again emphasises that Russianness is not simply defined by blood. It also highlights the role of class in the ability to pass (as a Finn, or at least as a non-Russian). Krivonos (2020, p. 388) has described how sites of racialised differentiation such as accent, audibility and language become significant in the context of Russian-speakers living in Finland. She connects the effort of passing as 'not Russian' to the internal, racialised division of Europeanness into proper Western and incomplete Eastern parts.

At the same time, the construction of differences between members of (what is ostensibly) the same minority group is not unique to Russian-speakers or the Finnish context. In the next section, I will attempt to situate the findings discussed above into the broader discussion on the relationship between acculturation and identification.

6.4 'Well, you have completely Finnicised here': Identity and acculturation

> My husband always tells me: well, you have completely Finnicised [офинилась] here. (Jelena)

The interviewees quoted in the previous section all identified as Russian. Yet most of them chose to hide - or at least avoid accentuating - their Russianness, at least in certain situations. This act seemed to be less about identification and more about constructing a conscious acculturation strategy (see chapters 2 and 5).

The close inspection of different identities and identifications of the Russian-speaking minority - and particularly of the discourses employed in constructions of difference and similarity - suggest that, as discussed above in chapter 2, the bilinear model conceptualising acculturation strategies as choices involving the

heritage and the majority culture may be insufficient for capturing the dynamics of this process. In particular, I would like to draw attention to the mismatch I commonly observed between how interviewees spoke about the Russian culture or the global Russian-speaking diaspora and how they spoke about the Russian-speakers living next to them.

Cohen (2011) has distinguished between different types of integration and suggested a category of 'individual integration', consisting of 'migrants who maintain favourable attitudes towards the home and host cultures, but negative attitudes towards the community of co-migrants'. He writes:

> A migrant from an elite class may intentionally distance him/herself from a local migrant community comprised primarily of those from a lower socio-economic class, and yet retain nostalgic and perhaps symbolic ties to the home culture.

The concept of individual integration seems to sum up the attitudes of many of the interviewees I have cited in the previous sections. Some research participants, by contrast, expressed negative attitudes towards the local community of Russian-speakers not because they *wanted* to distance themselves from it, but because they felt a lack of community support (and, in some cases, the lack of a community in the first place). Where this disappointment was accompanied by experiences of othering or discrimination from the majority culture, some could express attitudes similar to those of 'nostalgically separated' or even marginalised (but see chapter 5 for discussion of marginalisation).

In fact, examples of all 8 types of acculturation attitudes described by Cohen (2011, pp. 8-12) could be found within my sample. For instance, Vera exemplified the category of 'group integration' in that she held generally positive views towards Russia (her country of birth), Finland, and Russian-speakers in Finland (and, like discussed above, the Russian-speaking diasporas in other countries, although this level of global/transnational diasporas is not included in Cohen's model). It is again important to remember that acculturation attitudes may change with time (Cohen 2011, p. 15) and vary by contexts and domains; for instance, while Tamara could be described as 'nostalgically separated' in that she found it difficult to find friends either among Finnish- or Russian-speakers in Finland, she nevertheless had positive views of the Finnish society in other domains. Furthermore, as I have discussed above, the picture becomes more complicated in the case of two or more 'countries of origin'. Nevertheless, it seems that Cohen's typology may better capture the different acculturation attitudes and strategies among minority groups than the traditional bi-dimensional model.

One factor to consider in the context of the relationship between identity and acculturation is identity change. As discussed in chapter 2, change in identification is sometimes used as proxy for acculturation. Fieldwork findings suggest the need for caution in such approach. For instance, exploratory regression analysis found no statistically significant relations between psychological adaptation and strength of any (measured) identity. The interviews also suggest that more

surface-level changes, such as behavioural practices, are not necessarily related to changes in the self-understandings of the acculturating individuals.

Where changes in identifications did occur in the process of acculturation, they could generally be divided into five categories: strengthening, weakening, or rejection of pre-existing identities, gaining a new identity that either complements or replaces previous identifications, and questioning of the centrality of ethnic and national identifications (see section 6.2.4).

Often, identities would fluctuate. Maksim's account is a good example of the processual and context-dependent nature of identity. After first moving to Finland, he said, he had 'had this image of all Finns being ideal people' and felt that Finnish people were closer to him 'in spirit' than Russians. With time, however, his views had changed as he understood that Finns 'have a lot of flaws too':

> I'm a person of another culture and will never be a Finn. [—] I started having a better outlook on the plus sides of Russians, which I didn't notice while I was living there.

Maksim's narrative exemplifies the fluctuation of identity. In the beginning, his new (Finnish) identity had emerged, based largely on what he had now come to see as an 'idealised image' of what Finns are like. After realising that this image did not fully correspond to reality, he had started seeing Russians in a more positive light, and his Russian identity had been strengthened.

Often, the same person could give examples of how she has simultaneously become, for instance, more Finnish and more Russian. This supports the theory that attachment to heritage and majority cultures are two separate constructs, and changes in one do not necessarily lead to changes in the other (Berry 2021; see also chapter 2). It also highlights the futility of trying to force multicultural minority members to choose between their different identities and belongings. Yet cricket tests (Fletcher 2012; Weinfeld 2011) are still common, also in the Finnish context. For instance, in 2014 the Finnish public broadcaster Yleisradio organised a discussion called 'Russia night', during which the journalists asked Russian-speakers present in the studio whom they would side with in the case of a hockey match or a war between Finland and Russia.

The casual juxtaposition of a sports game and war may seem far-fetched, particularly as research suggests that cheering for your 'heritage team' may be a way of fighting exclusion and redefining diasporic spaces (see Fletcher 2012). Yet the idea that minority members will 'have to choose' is common not only in the public discourse, but also in some academic texts. For example, Kolstø (1996, pp. 613-614) writes:

> While political loyalties may be vague and blurred, the individual will eventually have to choose from among the political entities available to him the one to which he will pledge his allegiance. He may postpone the identity choice or hide behind a posture of "dual loyalty" but he cannot ride two horses indefinitely. In military conflict

> a soldier cannot fight on the side of two warring parties at one and the same time.

The above citation was written a quarter of a century ago, and the conceptualisation of dual loyalty as 'posture' that a minority member uses to hide behind is understandably somewhat outdated. Yet the passage illustrates a phenomenon that is still going strong: demand for disambiguation, where having only one national loyalty is seen as the natural state, and hybrid or multiple identifications perceived as suspicious. To mention but one example, similar attitudes have dominated the recent Finnish public discourse on dual citizenship, where those advocating for restrictions have positioned dual citizens, and Finnish-Russian dual citizens in particular, as potential security threat. A number of interviewees commented on these discussions, with many finding the 'air of suspicion' psychologically difficult. Oleg, for instance, said that he now feels like he has 'no identity'.

> Because, as it is, I would like to consider myself a citizen of the world. But unfortunately, this is probably not possible, and the processes that are taking place now, in the world and in the European politics, they as if force you to choose a side, yes, by force. In difference to those processes of globalisation that were there until the year [20]14.

The feeling of being 'forced' to choose a side will be returned to in the next chapter, focusing on discrimination and othering experienced by the research participants.

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter has explored identity constructions and feelings of belonging among Russian-speakers living in Finland. It has shown that Russian-speakers identify with a wide selection of ethnic, national and supranational groups. It has also indicated that, while the Russian language and certain other cultural markers (literature, art, hospitality) perceived as Russian are of central importance to many if not most Russian-speakers, they are not necessarily related to identification with (ethnic or national) Russianness, nor do they always translate to a feeling of community with other Russian-speakers.

Here, it should also be noted that supranational and ethnic/national identities are not necessarily exclusive. Many interviewees talked about identifying both as cosmopolitans/citizens of the world and with their, in many cases multiple, ethnic and national groups. Sometimes they did so even while pointing out that they realised that these groups did not actually exist as such. As Craig Calhoun (2007, p. 154) puts it, '[p]eople who have read about "the invention of tradition" are still moved by national anthems and soccer teams, enlist in armies, and understand themselves to have "home" countries when they migrate'.

At the same time, the fluidity and flexibility of identities should not be overestimated. Many people, including those experiencing acculturation, view

their identities as something stable and fixed. Just as importantly, (in)stability and hybridity should not be mistaken for each other - hybrid identities are not necessarily unstable, liquid, or open to change, and can in fact also be perceived as 'natural' by people to whom they belong. The challenge for social researcher doing empirical work on identities is to find a balance between the everyday use of the word - that often fails to capture the richness of the phenomenon and is sometimes employed in harmful ways to divide and exclude - and the more inclusive academic definitions that can feel foreign to the research participants.

It should also be noted that, even when people are at least to some extent free to choose how they identify, they are not free to choose how others see them. This is an important distinction to make: not identifying as a Russian does not necessarily protect one against being perceived as and treated - and, in some cases, facing discrimination - as one. As majority attitudes towards minority groups can greatly affect their acculturation (see chapter 2), it is clear that the position of Russian-speakers in the Finnish society should not and can not be ignored when trying to understand their processes of adaptation and identity construction. Starting from this viewpoint, the focus of the next chapter will be on discrimination and othering experienced by the research participants as well as the many ways in which they made sense of and spoke about these experiences.

Chapter 7

'I Used to Think that I Was Finnish': Experiences of Othering and Discrimination

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I showed how Russian-speakers engage in internal boundary drawing, constructing difference within the Russian-speaking minority based on factors such as class and culturedness. In this chapter, the focus will be on borders constructed by others, reflected in phenomena such as othering and discrimination.

Understanding these phenomena is important for several reasons. Firstly, those facing discrimination or rejection can have more trouble acculturating than minority members who do not have these experiences. Discrimination is one of the main causes of acculturative stress, and studies have found it to be directly associated with general health problems and decreased psychological well-being (Berry and Hou 2017; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2006; Tartakovsky et al. 2021; Ward et al. 2018).

Discrimination can also affect the ways in which people identify. Rumbaut (2008) has used the concept of reactive ethnicity to describe the heightening of the minority group consciousness in the face of discrimination. The relationship between discrimination and identification has also been approached with the help of the rejection-disidentification and rejection-identification models, which posit that experiences of discrimination lead minority members to distance themselves from the dominant group and may also strengthen their identification with the minority group (Tartakovsky et al. 2021). On the other hand, the findings of the previous chapter suggest that minority members may also attempt to distance themselves from or hide their belonging to a stigmatised group.

As discussed in chapter 4, Russian(-speaker)s are placed low in the Finnish ethnic hierarchies, and Finnish national identity is often constructed in opposition to Russianness (Jaakkola 2009; Raittila 2004). Karemaa (1998) has argued that Russians, along with Turks, are the most common representatives of Otherness in Europe and shown how the historical, racialised stereotypes of Russians were employed in the early 20th century Finland to instigate ethnic hatred against them. As a consequence, Karemaa (1998, p. 218) writes,

> Russians were irrevocably transformed into representatives of the Other, against whom a major section of the population harboured a deep-rooted ethnic hatred: regardless of their political standing, Russians had become, in the Finnish view, foes forever, fiends eternal, and filthy vermin.

Many researchers now separate between the 'old' and the 'new' forms of racism. The new, cultural racism posits that 'minorities are not biologically inferior, but different' on the basis of their culture (van Dijk 2000, p. 34). In contemporary Finland, the discrimination against Russian-speakers is based on both cultural racism and on old racist ideas of supposed physical, biological and/or genetic differences (Puuronen 2012).

In this chapter, I will discuss discrimination, othering, and the related phenomena as they emerged from the accounts of the research participant. I will shed light on the different types of discrimination experienced by Russian-speakers, suggesting that special attention should be paid to the intersections of gender and ethnicity. I will discuss the effects that these experiences had on Russian-speakers' acculturation and well-being and how discrimination relates to their self-identifications and the feeling of belonging to the Finnish society.

Here, it is important to note that, while many studies focus on discrimination faced by one or more minority group(s) in the context of one nation-state, such an approach is not necessarily the most fruitful one with regards to Russian-speakers, some of whom, like Ingrian Finns, may also have faced discrimination in their previous countries of residence. I will thus highlight not just the narratives of discrimination that relate to Finland and Russian(-speaking) identities, but also those connected to other places and self-understandings.

Discrimination and racism are controversial terms, the meaning of which was often questioned, contested, and negotiated in the accounts of my interviewees. Therefore, part of this chapter will be dedicated to exploring the ways in which Russian-speakers living in Finland talk about discrimination. I will discuss this while paying special attention to two main discourses emerging from the data, which I've named *narratives of responsibility* and *narratives of resistance*. To conclude, the chapter will explore the differences found in qualitative data with the help of statistical analysis, which further highlighted the need for an intersectional approach to studying acculturation.

7.2 'I don't know if that's the right word' - what counts as discrimination?

In the context of this work, I understand discrimination in a broad sense, encompassing not just discriminatory actions but also related phenomena such as racialisation and othering (see Puuronen 2011). During the fieldwork and the subsequent analysis, I did not judge what constitutes or does not constitute discrimination, focusing instead on the narratives emerging from the data and the feelings that the interviewees expressed in relation to them. This approach allowed me to keep an open mind with regard to the variety of different ways in which different forms of discrimination may manifest themselves in the everyday lives of minority members - but also to the various differences in the ways in which Russian-speakers participating in the study spoke about these phenomena. In the very diverse accounts of racism and discrimination that emerged from the data, the meaning of these terms was often negotiated and renegotiated, questioned, sometimes even contested.

The question of 'what counts as' emerged in many narratives, and interviewees sometimes sought my approval and/or recognition on whether what they had experienced was, indeed, discrimination. Talking about her 'unpleasant experience', a young woman first used the term discrimination, but then quickly added: 'I don't know if that's the right word'. Another interviewee wondered whether what she had experienced was due to her ethnic background, or if she was reading too much into the situation, telling me that I could 'of course judge this better' ('тебе, конечно, виднее').

Perhaps part of this uncertainty and tendency of seeking 'a second opinion' stems from the rather widespread idea that minorities use, exaggerate, or even fake instances of discrimination in order to gain certain benefits, such as preferential treatment. In the case of Russian-speakers, this narrative is often connected to the idea of the Russian government using (what are often believed to be fake or, at the very least, insignificant) incidents of discrimination against Russian-speakers for its own means.

The fieldwork provided no support for the theory of exaggeration. On the contrary, like Colic-Peisker (2005) in her study of Bosnian refugees in Australia, I noticed a tendency among my participants to downplay instances of discrimination and hesitate in using words such as racism or discrimination, even when describing cases which, to me, seemed clear-cut in their severity or where racist slurs, such as 'ryssä', were explicitly used.

Such tendencies have also been documented by other studies in the Finnish context. For instance, in their study on discrimination, harassment and racism in Finnish lower secondary schools, Zacheus et al. (2019) found that the ethnic minority students they interviewed often stated they did not want to 'make a fuss' or put emphasis on their experiences of discrimination. In a similar vein, Rastas (2004) has described how the young people she interviewed often avoided naming their experiences as racism.

Like Rastas, I also noticed that even when discrimination was called out,

its severity was sometimes downplayed, and mitigating circumstances (such as drunkenness of the perpetrator) were often pointed out. Euphemisms such as 'nationalism' or 'unpleasant behaviour' were also often used instead of 'discrimination' or 'racism'. Van Dijk (1992, p. 87) has pointed out that different denial strategies, such as euphemisms, often accompany racist discourse and communication, calling denial one 'of the crucial properties of contemporary racism'. Not only can such strategies be used to legitimise or deny racism, they can also create confusion within those experiencing it, making them doubt their experiences or at least hesitate talking about them.[1]

Another factor which may contribute to this confusion in the case of Russian-speakers is their position as a racialised, but mostly white(-passing) minority. Whiteness can be ascribed to them or denied from them on a case-by-case basis. Rzepnikowska (2015) has described a similar situation with regard to Polish immigrants in the UK, where they can be portrayed as white, Christian 'us' or as Eastern European, racialised others. In this sense, the whiteness of Russians is, in the Finnish context, ambiguous and uncertain. As Krivonos (2020, p. 389) writes with reference to post-Soviet migrants in Finland, 'even bodies that appear phenotypically white do not live up to the standards of hegemonic whiteness and Europeanness'.

This duality can further complicate the calling out of racist incidents. Some younger respondents, in particular, talked about the paradox of Russian(-speaker)s being presented as a separate - less civilised, less clean, less welcome - group of people, but their whiteness being used as an excuse or shield against any accusations of racism whenever this discourse was challenged (see Puuronen 2011).[2]

In general, the youngest respondents were also the most outspoken ones and the most likely to use the word 'racism' when describing the discrimination that they had faced. In fact, the data suggests a difference in narratives of discrimination between Finland-raised Russian-speakers and those who have moved to the country at a later age, as well as between those who identify as Finnish and those who do not: while nearly all interviewees disclosed at least some experiences that could be read as discrimination, interviewees who identified strongly as Finns or had grown up in Finland were more explicit both in their condemnation of such actions and in calling them out as racist or discriminatory. They also often engaged in narratives of resistance, used not only to counter negative images of Russian(-speaker)s, but also to express more inclusive, supranational and global identifications (see chapters 5 and 6).

[1] Several other factors, such as internalised oppression or wanting to give 'socially acceptable' answers may also explain why some participants downplay experiences of racism (Krieger 2000, pp. 57-58). Importantly, downplaying racism may also be a way of distancing oneself from 'narratives of victimhood' (Ben 2020, p. 3).

[2] When talking about whiteness in the context of Russian(-speaker)s, it is important to remember that Russians have, in many Western countries, historically been presented in racial terms (such as oriental and Asiatic) or as a separate race, and that in Nazi Germany they were with devastating consequences classified as untermenschen (see e.g. Connelly 1999; Neumann 1999; Paddock 2010). As shown by W.E.B Du Bois (see e.g. Mostern 1996), race is a social construct, but one with very tangible consequences.

Rastas (2004) found that many young people in her study said their decision to share their experiences of racism was motivated by the hope that it could help others who found themselves in similar situations. Similar feelings and motivations were expressed by my interviewees. As Elvira put it: 'I'm sorry, this is going to be a very dark conversation. But maybe these things that I talk about will help someone'.

7.3 'You get this feeling that you're dirty' - experiences of discrimination

Discrimination can have profound, long-lasting and even life-changing consequences for the lives of minorities. I received a striking reminder of this during my fieldwork when Zhanna, a successful professional in her 50s, told me that not teaching her children Russian was the biggest regret in her life. Why hadn't she? I asked. She sighed. At the time, she had thought that it would be safer: a man had attacked her on public transport for speaking Russian, and she did not want the same to happen to her children. Now, however, she was wondering whether she had made the right choice.

This was not the only account of racially motivated physical violence in the fieldwork material. Most instances of discrimination shared by the interviewees were, however, more subtle. In fact, many spoke of how discrimination can often be nearly invisible: people may feel that they are treated differently from others, but cannot quite 'put a finger on it'. Several interviewees described this feeling:

> I'm a very intuitive person, so of course I feel that not everyone has a good attitude towards me. But I behave with them as I would with anyone else. And sometimes they afterwards start greeting me, shouting 'oh, hello [Jelena]'.

> I've never felt open hostility from Finns because I'm Russian. But I've had the impression that the person I'm speaking to doesn't like Russians.

Elvira also touched on this subject, describing the feeling of uncleanliness that concealed discrimination had left her with.

> Discrimination is difficult because it's often, very often invisible. You get this feeling that you're dirty, that something is not right with you.

In Elvira's case, having evidence of discrimination helped her fight back against it. After having sensed for a long time that the other students at her school were saying racist things about her behind her back, she finally overheard a boy in her class referring to her with a racist slur ('ryssä'). She was then able to turn to grown-ups for help and, as the parents of the boy did not approve of such behaviour, to make it stop:

> But this time I heard it, and I could go home and tell mum what had happened. And she immediately called the parents, and the parents, of course, were furious, because in the family it's not... well, it seems that he got it from the society. And they talked to him, and it didn't happen again... from him.

Most interviewees had had at least some personal encounters with either visible or invisible forms of discrimination, although, as will be discussed in more detail below, their reading of and reaction to these situations varied greatly. Notably, however, the interviews show that not just experiences but also expectations of prejudice or discrimination can become significant. Jelena, for instance, described the nervousness she felt when, as part of her job, she participated in preparing an event for veterans who had fought against the Soviet Union in the Second World War - and the surprise and relief when she was treated just like her Finnish colleagues:

> I did not advertise myself, why would I advertise myself? The history, after all, is very ugly. But still they presented me [to the crowd], and people clapped for me just the same way as they did for everyone else.

7.4 'A certain type of a Russian girl' - the intersections of gender and ethnicity

The main focus of this chapter is on discrimination stemming from racism and xenophobia. It has to be recognised, however, that discrimination relating to characteristics other than race and ethnicity - such as disability, financial situation, or gender identity - can affect people in similar ways and should not be ignored, particularly as they often intersect with racism (Crenshaw 1991). In the Finnish context, gender and ethnicity, in particular, seemed to form an intersection the navigation of which sometimes required a lot of my interviewees, primarily those who identified as women.

Often, this had to do with personal relationships. Vera, a young woman who had moved to Finland for work, told me that she was instinctively careful about how she acted and what she talked about with her Finnish colleagues and friends. This was particularly the case when the conversations touched on her personal life, which she avoided talking about, not wanting to give the impression that she was searching for a boyfriend. Something that could be seen as rather 'natural' for a 28-year-old woman - looking for a partner - had, in her mind, the potential to make her seem like a 'certain type of a Russian girl', and, consequently, compromise her professional credibility. As none of her colleagues had made any direct comments that would warrant the caution, this can be read as another example of how expectations of prejudice can have a significant effect on the behaviour and actions of minority members.

Albeit already having a partner, Alina had to deal with similar stereotypes. She came from a relatively well-to-do family and had, directly prior to her move

to Helsinki, been living abroad in another Western country, where she had met her Finnish partner. She told me that she had never had any desire to move to Finland before meeting him, and had actually felt somewhat sad about leaving her previous country of residence (see chapter 5). Consequently, she was both hurt and surprised to learn that one of his best friends had warned him against having a relationship with her.

> She sat him down and told him: be careful, you know what Russian women are like. So [when he told me about it] I asked him, what *are* we like? [laughs] I know, of course, what she was getting at. But she didn't even know me, she'd never met me, and yet she was telling him this.

While neither Vera nor Alina explicitly voiced what this image of a Russian woman that they either wanted to avoid portraying or had been accused of being actually was, it seems safe to suggest that it has to do with the wide-spread and highly sexualised stereotype of Russian women as 'gold-diggers' and sex workers (Krivonos and Diatlova 2020; Wara and Munkejord 2018). Pirjo Pöllänen (2017), among others, has argued that images of Russia and Russianness are strongly gendered and that what she calls the 'shadow of a whore' is something that Russian women living in Finland face at some point in their lives. A young woman I met during my fieldwork addressed this image directly when discussing her fashion preferences.

> I probably wouldn't wear some rhinestone t-shirt and a short miniskirt.
>
> [Interviewer] Why not?
>
> I don't know if it's because it brings to mind the image of a Russian whore [hutsu] or because *I* think it's a tasteless combination. And add in high heels. I guess it's the Russianess... or what Finns understand as [Russian].

This account shows that, as much of a cliché as the idea of Russian women as sex workers may be, it has not lost its power. It also illustrates how (perceptions of) the attitudes of the majority population can be internalised by minorities. In the case of this young woman, she is not able to say with certainty whether she genuinely dislikes certain clothes or whether she refrains from wearing them simply to avoid presenting a certain, stigmatised and stereotypical image of a Russian woman.

Interestingly, none of the men I interviewed mentioned any stereotypes or instances of discrimination relating directly to their gender. Absence of evidence cannot be treated as evidence of absence, however, particularly keeping in mind the sample size and the relatively loose structure of the interviews. Again, my own position as a young woman might also have affected what and how the interviewees chose to disclose (see section 3.7).

7.5 'In Russia a Finn, here a Russian': identity, discrimination, and othering

In some cases, experiences of racism and discrimination had a direct effect on how interviewees thought of themselves in ethnic and national terms, as demonstrated by the following passage from an interview with Mikael - a young student who, like Elvira, had gone to school in Finland:

> It probably happened when I was around ten, until then I used to think that I was Finnish, after that it's been like I'm Russian, or other-Finnish, you could say in quotation marks [–].
>
> [Interviewer]: Why around ten, what happened then?
>
> The first bigger cases of ryssittely,[3] the bullying.

Mikael's account underlines the context-dependant nature of identities. Jelena also reflected on this when talking about her husband's experiences in Finland:

> He once said: In Russia - a Finn, here - a Russian. Because here, when he goes somewhere, it happens that he is perceived as a Russian. But when he was living there, he probably felt that he is a Finn.

The feeling expressed by Jelena's husband is very similar to that described by the participants in Varjonen, Arnold, and Jasinskaja-Lahti's longitudinal study (2013) on ethnic identity construction in (re)migrants with Finnish background before and after their move to Finland. During the first, pre-migration phase of the study, the participants predominantly described themselves as Finns; in the post-migration context, in contrast, Finnishness was often problematised, with other labels, including 'Russian', more commonly used.

If changes in Mikael's self-identification followed a prolonged period of racist bullying, the experience of Jelena's husband shows that simply being perceived and treated as 'an Other', even if not accompanied by outright discrimination, can be enough to problematise and perhaps even prompt a change in one's ethnic and national identity. It also accentuates the complicated and rather problematic status of Ingrian Finns in present-day Finland, where they are at the same time 'an old national and a new immigrant minority' (Martikainen 2004, p. 20). In the Soviet Union, Finnish language was disadvantaged both in relation to Russian and to other titular languages (see for instance Pavlenko 2006, p. 83). Consequently, the language was often lost even when the Finnish identity was preserved. Despite the fact that potential remigrants had to prove their Finnish heritage by attending formal interviews with Finnish officials and producing official Soviet documentation that categorised them, one of their parents or at

[3] As discussed in chapter 4, ryssittely is a noun that refers to the act of calling someone ryssä, a derogatory, racialised slur aimed at Russians.

least two of their grandparents as ethnic Finns, both majority population and Finnish officials often view the use of Russian language to be a sign of Russianness - which, in turn, is commonly seen as incompatible with Finnishness. Prindiville and Hjelm (2018) have described the changes in political discourse on Ingrian Finns: while in the beginning of the Right to Return policy, the Finnishness of Ingrian Finns was highlighted with discursive strategies referencing their Finnish ancestry, collective memory, Lutheran religion and difference vis-à-vis Russians, this changed after the remigrants' arrival in Finland, with politicians increasingly presenting them as Russians. Maria, who had moved to Finland in the 1990s, had noticed this change herself:

> I came here as a Finn, but it turned out that I'm an Ingrian, and in the end it turned out that I'm just a Russian.

The interviews suggest that this idea of 'Russianess' of Ingrian Finns often has practical consequences for them on societal and personal levels, with discrimination being one example of this. Several remigrants I spoke with both during this and my previous fieldwork in Finland (2013) also mentioned feeling hurt or annoyed by the general lack of awareness of the Ingrian Finnish history among the majority population. This was, they felt, in stark contrast with the general interest in history among Finns and the centrality of historical narratives in construction of Finnishness in domains such as education, political discourse and media. Experiences of being 'blamed' for the Winter War or 'getting lectured about' the history between Finland and Russia were relatively common among respondents of different backgrounds, but while many Russian-identified interviewees were able to shrug them off or even view them as 'natural' and 'understandable' ('the history, after all, is very ugly'), those who identified as Finns often felt that such behaviour was unfair and constituted a denial of their Finnishness.

Here, it is important to note that for people such as Jelena's husband and other Ingrian Finnish remigrants, othering and discrimination were not necessarily something encountered only in Finland. Notably, the role of discrimination in affecting people's self-identification also emerged in narratives outside of the Finnish context and in relation to non-Finnish identities. Consider, for instance, the following passage from Galya:

> I've never felt Soviet, probably in relation to what happened with my family, to how much all of my family has suffered both on my dad's and on my mum's side... no. Even though no one ever told me at home don't join the komsomol,[4] don't join the party. Again, my cousin who lives in Estonia, she's Russian completely. They probably think of me as an outcast, my Estonian relatives. [–] They're not interested in their past. Absolutely not. I studied the archives,

[4]Komsomol is the common abbreviation of the All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth, a youth organisation of the Soviet Communist Party aimed at young people between the ages of 14 and 28.

> my other cousin also. They didn't, they have no interest in it whatsoever.

Galya's account highlights how the identities of Finland's Russian-speakers are affected (among other factors) not just by prejudice and othering faced in Finland, but also that encountered in other countries. Moreover, in addition to discrimination experienced personally, family narratives and memories of racism and repressions can also play an important part in the process of identity construction. Again, the malleability of ethnicity is present in this account: Galya describes her cousin both as a 'Russian completely' and as an 'Estonian', but, due to lack of interest in family history, never as an Ingrian Finn.

7.6 Narratives of resistance and responsibility

7.6.1 You feel like it's your own community: narratives of resistance

Despite being able to confront racism in the instance described above, Elvira made it clear during our interview that the discrimination she endured affected the way she felt able - and willing - to identify - so much so that she eventually started identifying as a European, feeling that this was a more inclusive identity than either Finnishness or Russianness alone. Previous studies (see Iskanius 2006), too, have indicated that at least part of Finland's Russian-speakers reject the nationalist call for 'choosing sides', instead using their ability to re-negotiate identities and belongings on many different levels to their benefit.

In the present data, adopting supranational or global identities (discussed above and in chapter 6) was the most common but by no means the only example of this negotiation. In addition to self-labelling as Europeans, global citizens or citizens in the world, it often also related to spending time with other members of minorities and/or in (more) culturally diverse spaces. One interviewee mentioned the Orthodox church as an example of such space:

> There are Russians, Eritreans, Estonians, Romanians, Finnish Swedes [in the church], so naturally you feel like it's your own community [–]. You don't stand out for not having only Finnish background.

Another common strategy was challenging the negative representations of Russia and Russians in the Finnish public discourse and/or countering them with positive counter-narratives. For instance, one young woman that I spoke with in the run-up to the centenary celebrations of Finland's independence in December 2017 highlighted the fact that Finland had become more multicultural during the Russian Empire as an example of positive influence that Russia has had on Finland during the countries' common history. Focusing on this positive outcome, instead of the negative ones often highlighted in history classes and newspapers, allowed her to more comfortably combine her Finnish and Russian identities, sometimes presented as inherently incompatible.

Another narrative that I viewed as a strategy of resistance was highlighting one's Russianess despite having the option of hiding it. For instance, while drawing on their 'ethnic Finnishness' may help those Russian-speakers who have Finnish background lessen prejudicial and negative attitudes towards themselves, people may be reluctant to use this strategy. This idea was clearly expressed by an Ingrian Finnish participant who said that while revealing her Ingrian Finnish background might soften the attitude of the majority Finns towards her, she declined to make use of this 'opportunity':

> For Finns if you speak Russian - you are Russian, it does not matter if you're from Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, whether you're an Ingrian Finn... well, it helps a bit you say you're Ingrian, but I don't use this, I [tell people that I] am Russian. Because I should be... I do this out of principle. I should be accepted as a person, not based on my nationality.

Ingrian Finns and interviewees who had grown up in Finland often showed this sort of solidarity and 'generosity' towards all Russian-speakers, speaking out about discrimination or not hiding their 'Russianess' even though this would have been a possible strategy to many (not all) of them. Overall, the internal ethnic, national and religious diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking community was rarely employed in a negative way for the purposes of improving one's own position. This is notable in the light of the 'discourses of distinctions', described in the previous chapter, which drew on (presumed or actual) differences in class, culturedness, and political convictions as a way to construct difference to other Russian-speakers. It is also notable in the light of the attitude studies that show that the Finnish-speaking majority has a considerably more positive attitude towards Ingrian Finns than (ethnic) Russians (Jaakkola 2009). At the same time, many share the belief, expressed above, that the majority population does not recognise this diversity in practice: interviewees often pointed out that Finns view all Russian-speakers as Russians, regardless of their 'actual' background.

While these 'narratives of resistance' and other strategies of coping discussed above were found helpful by many interviewees, it is important to note that they are not necessarily available to everyone. In particular, it has to be pointed out that the majority of the interviewees were based in Helsinki or other big cities and that life in these (by Finnish standards) relatively culturally diverse places can be very different than in small towns and villages. Tamara described the loneliness of a life in a small rural locality, where she was the only 'foreign' child and, for years, did not have any friends:

> When I came to school, after a while people started discussing me behind my back, who is she, she's Russian, don't go to her... I heard a lot of it and it affected me a lot, because I was young. After that, because of that, you become scared to speak to anyone.

Tamara felt that this prolonged experience of othering had long-lasting effects not just on her adaptation to Finland and her general well-being, but also on her personality:

> I noticed that I am probably a lone wolf, a person who likes to be alone. [–] It happened here [in Finland]. In Russia I had many friends, we would always spend time together, until late nights. Grandmother was always trying to get me to come in. So it was really difficult for me personally, and... it was really difficult to get out of that situation, to learn to live here [–].

Narratives of resistance were also complicated by the tendency, discussed above, to minimise experiences of discrimination experienced by Russian-speakers as well as the fears related to how such activism would be viewed by the mainstream society. Rogova (2020, p. 2-3) has argued that claims of Russian(-speaking) minority groups not being grassroots organisations representing real people with their own opinions and political loyalties, but rather mere puppets orchestrated by the Kremlin, are typical not only of the mainstream North American media but also of certain scholarly research. In such atmosphere, simply calling out instances of discrimination could lead to being perceived as disloyal, some interviewees feared. In this way, racist stereotypes not only reinforce discrimination but also make it difficult to campaign against it.

7.6.2 'Perhaps it's not always good to shout loudly in Russian': narratives of responsibility

Instead of trying to make generalisations, my goal in this chapter is to zoom in on individual experiences and narratives of discrimination, as well as their relation to acculturation and identity. Nevertheless, as I progressed with the fieldwork and the subsequent analysis, commonalities as well as differences soon started emerging from the data. One of the most interesting ones was the contrast in the ways that racism and discrimination were discussed by those interviewees who had been born in Finland, moved to the country in childhood, and/or identified as (Ingrian) Finns, and the more recent migrants who had migrated to Finland in adulthood. By and large, the latter reported fewer encounters with racism, downplayed the severity of such encounters, and, more importantly and in contrast with the narratives of the younger interviewees, often focused on and assigned responsibility to minority members themselves. For example:

> There is this old saying - you don't go to someone else's monastery with your own statute.[5] Have you heard it?
>
> [Interviewer]: Yes.
>
> It's very suitable. Before we came here, we knew that we were coming here, we weren't brought here against our will. You have to study the mentality, to understand how people live here and how the society works. [–] Of course, we will come across actual bad things here. Such as nationalism. But well, we can't change the society

[5] В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят, meaning: when in Rome, do as the Romans do.

> completely, right? I think you shouldn't make the situation worse, you have to find common ground. If you come here, you must also understand and give in in some things.

As this passage from Jelena's interview shows, these *narratives of responsibility* often focused on minorities' own actions and expectations with regards to prejudice and discrimination. Encountering 'bad things' such as nationalism is presented as natural, perhaps even inevitable, and the role of a good migrant is to ignore the unpleasant encounters and avoid making the situation worse. Perhaps this willingness to find common ground with the majority population is why Jelena avoids using words such as racism or discrimination, opting for the softer euphemism, *nationalism*, instead.

Jelena's narrative focuses on first-generation migrants - visible in word choices such as *before we came here* - and she acknowledged that this attitude might be harder to achieve for kids who had grown up in Finland but still encountered negative attitudes. Nevertheless, her account emphasised the belief that members of minority can affect the way they are treated by their own actions. This idea was expressed even more directly by Galya:

> I'm talking about the idea that Russian-speakers are oppressed... I don't know anyone from Lithuania, but I do from Latvia and many from Estonia of course, and I feel like those of us who lived in Estonia, we were used to... we lived in the midst of Estonians, and somehow inside we understood that perhaps it's not always good to shout loudly in Russian. Or that sometimes you can close your mouth when you're passing a big [group] and you don't have to speak loudly in Russian when there are a lot of Finns around you. But I have many friends who came from Russia. It's a big republic, and - this is my opinion - they think of themselves as a great nation, OK, I agree with that. And for that reason they don't speak quieter, let's put it like that. In any situation, you can hear them.

Here, Galya's narrative builds difference not just and perhaps not as much between Russian-speakers and Finns as between different categories of Russian-speakers: those from the Baltic States, particularly Estonia, and those from Russia, who are presented as a different (albeit a great) nation. The experience of being in a minority even prior to the move to Finland has equipped the former group with a code of behaviour appropriate for minorities that the latter, in Galya's account, often lack.

Anton, an early-career researcher who had moved to Finland from St. Petersburg in his early twenties, also reflected on the differences between the various sub-groups of Russian-speakers. For him, however, the significant distinctions in attitudes towards discrimination were not related to countries of origin but rather to education and employment:

> I would say that there are different types of Russians. [–] These are very, very different groups and strata of people. Many of them I

> think would give diametrically opposite answers to many questions... for example, I may say that Russians are not oppressed or maltreated that much... they would answer completely differently, I've heard these answers, for example at the Finnish language courses... There is probably some truth in their words too. I'm a bad indicator of oppression, because I came to study, I graduated from a good university, I work at a normal job, I can go and find another job... many of them have no education, no opportunities, and they feel much more stuck.

Despite the differences in emphasis, all of the above 'narratives of responsibility' build a difference between those Russian-speakers who experience discrimination - or, perhaps more importantly, react to it - and those who do not, with the former group cast in a more flattering light. This could be read as an attempt to distance oneself from the 'problematic' members of one's minority: those who are not as highly educated, are more visible or audible, do not follow the expected ways of behaviour or are not willing to 'give in' and smooth over difficulties they encounter. In this, they are strikingly similar to the narratives discussed in chapter 6 with relation to identity and passing.

At times, the tendency to downplay one's own experiences of (what I read as) discrimination or racism would translate into doing the same with relation to not just fellow Russian-speakers, but also other minorities. After pointing out that negative attitude towards migrants had increased in recent years, one interviewee suggested that the 'poor Finns' must be sad about the rapid increase in the number of foreigners in the country, lumping herself together with other migrants and ironically using the word понаехали (ponajehali; can be roughly translated as 'arrived in excessive numbers') to refer to this imagined 'collective of foreigners'. Another interviewee who engaged in a narrative of responsibility with regards to Russian-speakers employed a similar way of speaking about refugees. There was always a degree of ambivalence to such statements, however - the same interviewee underlined that she had no right to criticise other migrants or even to comment on the Finnish immigration policies, as this should be left to 'the Finns'. This statement is particularly interesting, as the interviewee in question had Finnish citizenship.

On the other hand, here, too, the experiences outside of the Finnish context may have had an effect on the narratives. Galya, for instance, contrasted the situation that members of minorities face in Finland with her family's experiences during the early Soviet times, discussed above. As suggested by the following passage, any difficulties encountered in Finland lose significance when contrasted with what the family had to undergo in the Soviet Union:

> I think we live such a good life compared to our ancestors, they suffered so much, that it's a sin for us to complain.

7.6.3 Exploring the differences with the help of statistical tests

During the fieldwork process and the subsequent data analysis, certain differences in the narratives of discrimination caught my attention. Firstly, I noticed that the narratives of responsibility were mainly engaged in by first-generation migrants. I also noticed that, by and large, younger interviewees, Ingrian Finns, and those who had grown up in Finland reported more discrimination than other participants. The trends in qualitative data seemed so strong that I decided to test them with statistical analysis.

Regression analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between feeling Ingrian Finnish and combined discrimination scores (t = 3.069, p = .002). I also tested the relationship between entering Finland as an Ingrian Finnish remigrant and discrimination. Again, a statistically significant positive relationship was found (t = 2.008, p = .046). Thus, identifying or arriving in Finland as an Ingrian Finn does indeed seem to be related to experiencing more discrimination, as suggested by qualitative data.

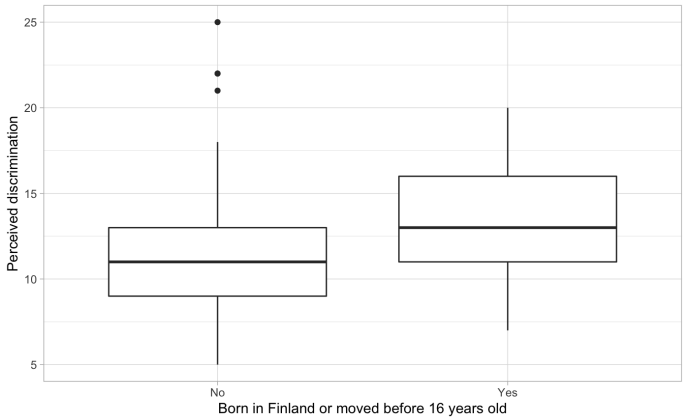

Figure 7.1: The relationship between being raised in Finland and perceived discrimination.

Regression analysis was also performed to test the relationship between growing up in Finland and experiences of discrimination. Again, statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables was found (t = 2.926, p = .004). Statistical analysis also showed that Finland-raised respondents experienced considerably less difficulties with cultural adaptation (β = -1.39, p = .011) than others. The effect was even more noticeable for those who had lived in Finland since early childhood (β = -1.78, p = .0187).

The qualitative data provides several potential explanations for these results. Firstly, the interviews suggest that discrimination is experienced more often in childhood, both from adults and from other children. School emerged as a domain of discrimination in many accounts, as also indicated by previous studies

(Souto 2011, 2013). Previous research has also shown that childhood experiences of racism and discrimination may be particularly difficult (see Rastas 2004).

Secondly, many of the Ingrian Finnish research participants had arrived in Finland in the 1990s and the early 2000s when, many interviewees suggested, Finland had been less multicultural and racism had been more prevalent (although opinions of this differed notably, with some interviewees pointing to increase in discrimination in recent years). At the same time, experiences of discrimination among 'co-ethnic' migrants do not seem to be a phenomenon restricted to the Finnish context. For instance, in their study comparing Russian-speaking co-ethnic migrants to Israel and Jewish minority members who had stayed in Russia, Tartakovsky et al. (2021, p. 202) found that those who had migrated experienced more discrimination than those who had stayed in Russia, concluding that 'immigrants from the FSU feel less accepted by the majority society in Israel than do Jews staying in Russia'.

Finally, both Ingrian Finnish and Finland-raised interviewees often disclosed feelings of 'always being the Other', discussed in chapter 5. This is in contrast to many first-generation adult migrants, who had often (although not always) grown up as members of the majority population in their former countries of residence. I suggest that this feeling of 'perpetual Otherness' may complicate and aggravate experiences of discrimination.

The interviews suggest that the frequency of racist encounters may also be related to one's positionality. The role of language and accent in this process has already been discussed above. The job in which one worked seemed to be another important factor in how much racism someone experienced. One interviewee, who worked as a bus driver, recounted how telling a customer that he could not smoke inside the bus had resulted in 'being doused with discriminatory words'. Another participant, who also worked at a customer-facing job, said she had to deal with discrimination (although she did not use this word) every day.

> [At work] I am called names every day. Every day, that's a fact. About me being a 'Russki whore' [ryssähuora] or 'learn to speak Finnish first and then come to work' and all that. I don't pay any attention to it at all, because if you pay attention to it, you won't be able to work. But the Finnish colleagues are absolutely shocked about it. It's a shock for them that Finns behave [—] in this way.

The participant contrasts 'the shock' that her colleagues feel with her own, nonchalant attitude towards the discrimination, which for her is so common that she doesn't care 'at all'. While listening to this account, I wondered whether the telling of the situation through the eyes of her colleagues allowed her to highlight the shocking nature of what she was telling me without appearing to be shocked or 'overreacting' herself. As such, one also has to consider whether some of the narratives of responsibility, described above, could be a way of coping with discrimination: as the above participant put it, if you paid attention to every instance of racism, you would not be able to work.

Notably, and as expected, statistical analysis showed that experiences of discrimination were related to acculturation strategies preferred by the partici-

pants. Analyses showed small, positive correlations between combined discrimination scores and both separation (r = .196, n = 187, p = .007) and marginalisation (r = .276, n = 184, p < .001). The relationship is more pronounced when looking at single variables: not feeling accepted by Finns showed moderate, statistically significant positive correlation with marginalisation (r = .436, n = 186, p < .001), while feeling that Finns have something against the respondent was similarly related to both separation (r = .291, n = 189, p < .001) and marginalisation (r = .370, n = 186, p < .001). In short, experiencing discrimination seems to relate to marginalisation and, to a lesser extent, separation in the case of the Russian-speakers in my sample. Similar results have previously been reported among Russian-speakers in different countries (see Pisarenko 2006) as well as other minority groups (Ramos et al. 2016).

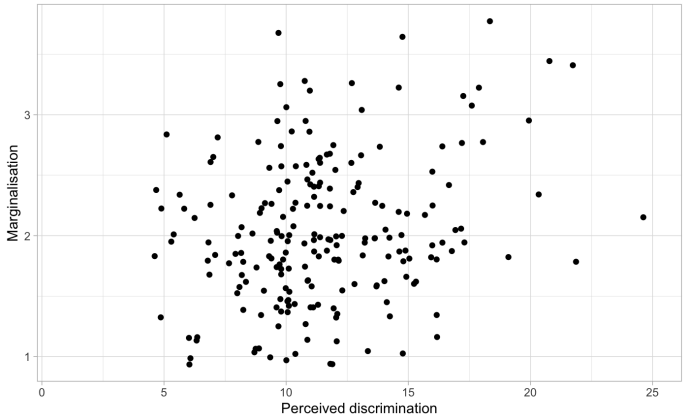

Figure 7.2: The relationship between perceived discrimination and marginalisation scores.

7.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the experiences of othering and discrimination experienced by members of Finland's Russian-speaking minority, as well as the ways in which they spoke about these experiences. Similarly to findings discussed in chapter 6, which showed that research participants sometimes constructed difference to other Russian-speakers based on factors such as culturedness, education, and political opinions, experiences of discrimination - and, perhaps even more importantly, one's attitudes towards them - were sometimes used as a way of constructing intragroup differences through *narratives of responsibility.*

At the same time, *narratives of resistance* that many interviewees engaged in questioned these divisions, resisting discriminatory, prejudiced discourses. This suggests that the extent of internal boundary drawing (Barth 1969) within

Finland's Russian-speaking minority should not be exaggerated: while some members of the Russian-speaking communities do construct difference vis-à-vis their fellow Russian-speakers, others resist these discourses, constructing solidarity instead.

In the context of my fieldwork, the theme of solidarity often emerged in connection with religion and religious communities. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the role that religion and faith play in the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speakers. First, in chapter 8, I will outline the ways in which religion gained significance in the research participants' lives. Then, in chapter 9, I will explore how religion in its many forms related to Russian-speakers' processes of adaptation and acculturation.

Chapter 8

Believing, Belonging, Practising and Participating: Religion in the Lives of Finland's Russian-Speakers

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will approach the question of religion in the lives of Russian-speakers living in Finland through the prism of four separate, if sometimes interrelated domains: belief, membership, practice and participation. Drawing on original qualitative and quantitative data collected during fieldwork, I will discuss each of the domains and address the mismatch between them, as well as the differences between personal and organised religion. I will also look at religious diversity and syncretism, which challenge the idea of religion as something rigid, insular and immutable. To conclude, I will examine the relationship between religion, faith and the experience of migration.

As outlined in chapter 2, religion is a complex and ambiguous term, used to denote various different meanings both within academia and in the context of everyday life. The fieldwork I conducted further highlighted the difficulty of reaching an all-encompassing definition of religion and – beyond a few markers habitually understood as 'core religion', such as faith in God and prayer – a widely shared consensus on whether or not a certain phenomenon falls under the domain of religion. For instance, some people viewed meditation as a spiritual experience; others considered it a strictly secular part of their exercise routine; some wore a crucifix as a mark of their faith, while others regarded it a fashion choice, and so forth.

Leaning on a constructivist understanding of religion (Hamilton 2001; Hjelm 2016), my goal during the fieldwork was less to concoct a comprehensive defi-

nition of religion or demarcate its borders than to gain a wide-ranging understanding of the various ways in which it becomes defined *through action* in the lives of Finland's Russian-speakers. In keeping with this approach, the following analysis centres around four actions that emerged from the data: believing, belonging, practising and participating.

With believing, I refer to (expressions of) faith, often deemed the most central and significant aspect of religion. Belonging covers both official membership in faith-based organisations and the personal feeling of 'being a part' of a certain religious community or tradition. With practising and participating, the aim is to differentiate between social and private forms of religious rituals and expression, those that 'derive their meaning from a group context' and those that do not require participation in any collective settings (Davidson 1975 p. 85). Praying, reading the Bible or lighting votive candles at the icon corner in one's home are examples of private practice commonly engaged in by the interviewees. By contrast, with participation I refer to both partaking in religious gatherings in public (e.g. church services), and to taking part in *social* activities organised by churches or other religious communities.

I would argue that just as interesting as these actions in themselves are the relationships between them. As I will show in this chapter, believing, belonging, practising and participating do not necessarily correlate with each other - it is indeed possible to believe without belonging (Davie 1990) and participate without believing. Evidence of this apparent 'mismatch' between different domains of religion emerged from the qualitative material - the fieldwork notes and the accounts of the interviewees - and was also reflected in the survey data.

Here, it has to be noted that the interview sample was skewed towards those who identify as religious - around one half of the interviewees identified as Orthodox, one quarter as Lutherans or members of another religious group, and one quarter as non-religious.[1] This was due to a deliberate sampling strategy designed to capture the richness of religious landscape and to tease out the ways in which religion gains significance in the lives of those Russian-speakers who do identify as religious. By contrast, the survey population was randomly selected, and as such provides a more accurate picture of the levels of religiousness among Finland's Russian-speaking population. In combining the two approaches, my goal in this next chapter is to provide an analysis of the role and importance of religion in the lives of Finland's Russian-speakers in the early 21st century.

8.2 Importance of religion in everyday life

What role does religion play in the acculturation of Russian-speakers living in Finland? This question, the central question of my thesis, cannot be answered without first considering another one: what role does it play in their everyday lives?

[1] It should be noted, however, that the first two groups also include people who were not active in any religious organisations and/or who viewed themselves as agnostic.

One of the survey questions asked the respondents to assess the importance of religion in their lives. The responses were quite evenly distributed between those who found religion important and those who did not: 13 percent of respondents said that religion was very important to them and a third that it was quite important. Another third indicated that religion was hardly important to them, while 23 percent said that it was not at all important.

In interviews, the importance of religion was not usually assessed in such categorical terms. Some interviewees described religion as one of their most significant guides to behaviour and an essential part of their day to day lives. A few mentioned that becoming (more) religious or finding faith in Finland was what they were most grateful for when looking back on their process of migration. A roughly equal number said that religion had virtually no role in their daily life. Some interviewees described themselves as 'anti-religious', although the meaning of this varied notably from person to person: while one such interviewee positioned herself as actively anti-religious and even described losing friends over her worldview, others, despite their self-professed overall negative attitudes towards different forms of religion, had a more neutral stance - demonstrated by the interviewee who said that, despite his (lack of) beliefs, he sometimes attended church services because he found them atmospheric.

For most interviewees, however, the role of religion in their lives and their own assessment of importance of religion for them personally fell somewhere between these two poles. These 'interviewees in the middle' could often be described as religious (even though, as will be discussed later on in this chapter, this might not be the word they would themselves prefer to use) in some ways - believing in God, for instance - but this was not necessarily something that was at the forefront of their minds each day. Typically, such a person might say that they had been baptised and believed in God, but did not officially belong to any congregation, or that they belonged to a church but only attended services 'every now and then'. Some said that the role of faith and religion in their lives became particularly highlighted during important life events or times of challenges, such as migration. In short, they largely viewed religion 'as part and parcel of the larger picture of living their lives' (Hood et al. 2018, p. 2).

Ammerman (2013, p. 9) has described a type of spirituality that is not a supernatural force for salvation nor a sacred centre that will orient all life, but instead 'a more modest, but nonetheless profound recognition that the world is not wholly a story that can be empirically told', a layer of consciousness that 'can weave, more or less pervasively, in and out of ordinary events'. This description seemed to fit many of the Russian-speakers that I interviewed during my fieldwork, and particularly those 'in the middle'. Of course, Ammerman's study of English-speakers in two US cities is not directly comparable to my fieldwork among Russian-speakers in Finland. There are various notable regional, cultural and historical differences between the two contexts: for instance, unlike Ammerman's (2013) 'Golden Rule Christians', few of my participants had been actively taught a religion in their childhood homes (only 12 percent of survey respondents said that they had received a religious upbringing, and 40 percent said religion was not present in their childhood home), and, as will

be shown later in this chapter, many do not officially belong to any religious organisations. Nevertheless, there are noteworthy similarities between Ammerman's description of Golden Rule religion that mixes sacred and secular and my observations of the lived religiosity in the day to day lives of Finland's Russian-speakers: focus on ethics over dogma, lack of interest in 'too many' theological details, relatively low frequency of religious participation, emphasis on everyday morality and 'being a good person', religious tolerance and lack of proselytism, tendency to highlight religious values such as helping those in need over more traditional forms of practice, and willingness to lean on faith and spirituality in times of difficulties.

In general, however, it was not possible to group interviewees or survey respondents into clear-cut, distinct categories based on their religiousness. This was partly due to the wide and somewhat ambiguous definition of the word (see chapter 2). In fact, many participants pointed to the difference between faith and religion, suggesting that while religion may not be hugely important in the lives and, consequently, the processes of adaptation of Finland's Russian-speakers, faith certainly was. Both the fieldwork and the survey confirmed that the importance of religion varied greatly based on what was understood by it. In the next section, I will look at four distinct but interconnected ways in which religion manifested itself in the lives and accounts of Finland's Russian-speakers.

8.3 Dimensions of religion

8.3.1 Believing

Faith was usually characterised as the most important domain of religion both by the interviewees and in the open-ended survey responses. It was positioned as the core of religion and often described as being central to a person's life even when he or she did not participate in religious services or officially belong to a church or another religious organisation. The centrality of believing in relation to religion was demonstrated by the survey respondent who, when answering the question on the 'importance of religion in your life', had struck out the word *religion* (религия) and replaced it with 'faith' (вера).

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that believing was also the most prevailing 'religious action' among the respondents, noticeably more common than belonging, practising or participating. A large majority of the survey respondents said they believe in God: 36 percent said they believed in God as taught by Christianity, while another 32 percent said they believed in God, but rather differently than taught by the Church. Additionally, some 12 percent said they were not quite sure whether or not they believed in God.[2]

Notably, less than 9 percent of respondents said they did not believe in God. The results were similar when asked about belief in a higher power: nearly three quarters of respondents indicated they either believed in it firmly or found it

[2]In addition to the figures mentioned above, three percent of respondents said they doubted the existence of God and eight percent said they did not know or did not want to say.

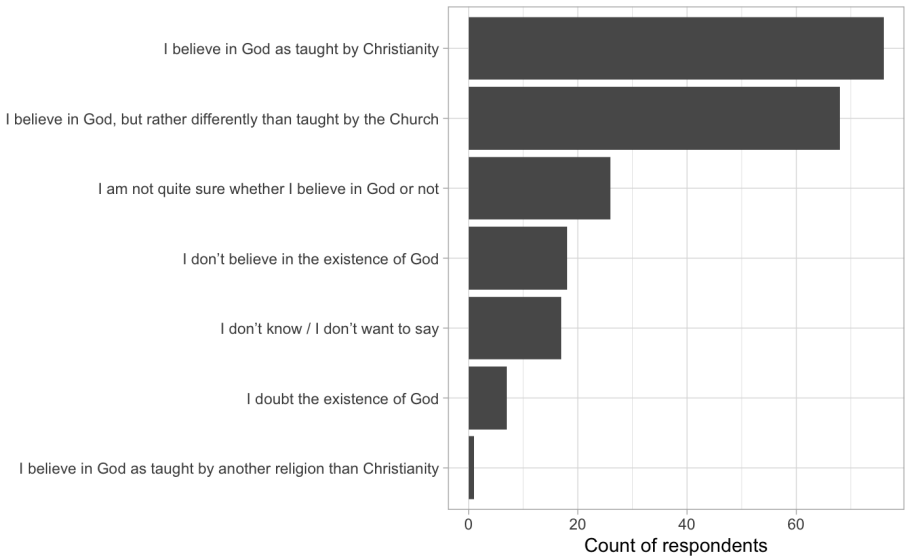

Figure 8.1: Belief in God among survey respondents

likely, with less than 9 percent choosing 'don't believe at all'. This is broadly in line with recent international studies; for instance, in 2012 seven percent of the surveyed EU residents self-identified as atheist (Eurobarometer 2012), while ten percent of respondents in a recent US poll said they did not believe in God (Newport 2016).[3]

In the US context, Gervais and Najle (2018) have argued that people who privately disbelieve in God may nevertheless self-present as believers even in anonymous surveys due to social pressures favouring believing and religiosity. Based on the interviews, it can be hypothesised that the opposite was true for the participants who grew up in the Soviet Union where the social pressure strongly favoured atheism, and, depending on the decade, practising one's religion could result in not just social stigmatisation but also other negative consequences, even persecution (Corley 1996; Lane 1978; Ramet 2005). To the best of my knowledge, there have been no studies addressing potential self-reporting bias with relation to religious belief in the post-Soviet context, but even taking into the account the rapid change in attitudes towards religion in the region, I believe that the two opposing attitudes of the Soviet and the post-Soviet era may to some extent balance each other. Thus, such pressures are unlikely to be of great concern to Russian-speakers in Finland - particularly as the idea of strong societal pressure to present as religious is not directly applicable to the Finnish context.

[3]Note, however, that according to Salomäki et al. (2020, p. 47), the share of atheists across Europe has fallen from 8 to 2 percent in less than forty years.

In any case, the data suggest that belief in God or a higher power does not always go hand in hand with other religious beliefs, other forms of religion, or even with identifying as a believer. As an extreme example, one respondent indicated that she firmly believed in a higher power yet identified as an atheist. At first, I assumed this to be a mistake, but her subsequent answers seemed to confirm this position. In fact, a recent survey found that nearly 20 percent of self-identified atheists believe in some kind of a higher power or spiritual force (Pew Research Center 2018).

Similarly, identifying as a believer did not necessarily mean having no doubts or believing everything taught by one's religion. Some interviewees brought up the uncertainty inherent to the act of believing, emphasising the difference between believing and knowing. Maksim, who described himself as an Orthodox believer, explicitly addressed this uncertainty in his quest to adopt an 'objective approach' when talking about God with his young son:

> I believe it's like that, but then again... Not me, nor you, we don't know anything about it. We only believe, but maybe God doesn't exist after all. I even say so to my son, when he asks if God exists. I tell him: It might even be that not. But... I'm a biologist, for instance, and everything that I've learnt in university tells me that God does exist. But we don't know.

Maksim also expressed his annoyance with people who, as he saw it, interpret the Bible in a literal sense - for instance, those who insisted that God created the Earth in six days and rested on the seventh:

> As a person who has graduated from university, I tell them: There's no seventh day. You shouldn't take everything literally.

Similar sentiments were repeated by several interviewees, and the survey responses also suggest that believing in God or a higher power does not require one to believe in everything else taught by a religious organisation. As expected, some beliefs were more widespread than others. This was the case both for beliefs sanctioned by official religious organisations and for the so-called unofficial beliefs. For example, a large majority of respondents believed that Jesus was a historical person, that angels exist and that what a person beliefs will happen to him or her, but far fewer believed that stones and crystals have the potential to store energy.[4] The survey results also showed notable differences in levels of disbelief and uncertainty felt about different religious beliefs. For example, while only 11 percent of respondents said they did not know whether or not they believed in a higher power, a fifth answered 'don't know' when asked about their belief in God that is good, in God creating everything, and in Jesus atoning for the sins of the mankind.

[4]Nevertheless, it is notable that more than a third of the respondents reported finding the latter proposition likely or believing in it firmly - an example of syncretism, to be discussed later in this chapter, or simply of religious 'tuning' (Salomäki 2019).

In short, if believing, in general, emerged as the most significant part of religion, belief specifically in the existence of God emerged as the most significant belief. Interviewees and survey respondents alike often emphasised the significance of a personal relationship with God over the participation in the services organised by a church or another religious community, as will be discussed in the next section.

Believing without participating

During the fieldwork, it became clear that many Russian-speakers make a clear distinction between faith and (organised) religion. As one survey respondent wrote at the end of the questionnaire, in the space reserved for free comments:

> Religion and faith, these are very different concepts! Religion is tradition. Faith is the relationship with God.

Another respondent also touched upon this distinction, highlighting that one does not need to read the Bible or frequent religious events in order to have faith:

> I think that Faith is that what is inside us... Everything else, the material (Bible, clothing...) has nothing to do with it. Everyone should have the right to choose what of the material [side] is important to them in Faith and what isn't. In order to believe, you don't have to read the Bible or go to church.

The tendency to prioritise faith and belief over religious participation is not unique to Finland's Russian-speakers. In a recent US study (Pew Research Center 2016) the Christian respondents rated belief in God (86 percent of the respondents), being grateful for what they have (71 percent), forgiving those who have wronged them (69 percent) and always being honest (67 percent) as essential to their faith. By contrast, only 35 percent of respondents rated attending religious services as essential to being Christian. A similar pattern emerged from the interviews I conducted during fieldwork: believing in God and behaving 'well' were deemed important, attending church considerably less so.

Nevertheless, several interviewees expressed feelings of guilt or regret for not attending church 'often enough'. Lack of participation was often mitigated by private practice. For instance, Jelena told me that, despite rarely making it to organised services, she and her husband made sure to regularly light votive candles and say their prayers in front of the 'prayer corner' at their home. Such home practices will be discussed in more detail below.

8.3.2 Belonging

Data from Finland's national statistical institution (Tilastokeskus 2016) shows that Russian-speakers living in Finland are much less likely than an average Finn

to belong to a faith-based organisation. In 2015, 77 percent of Russian-speakers did not belong to any officially recognised religious organisation, while 9 percent were officially members of the Lutheran and 13 percent of the Orthodox church. Among the general population, the numbers were 24 percent, 73 percent and 1 percent, respectively (OSF 2016).

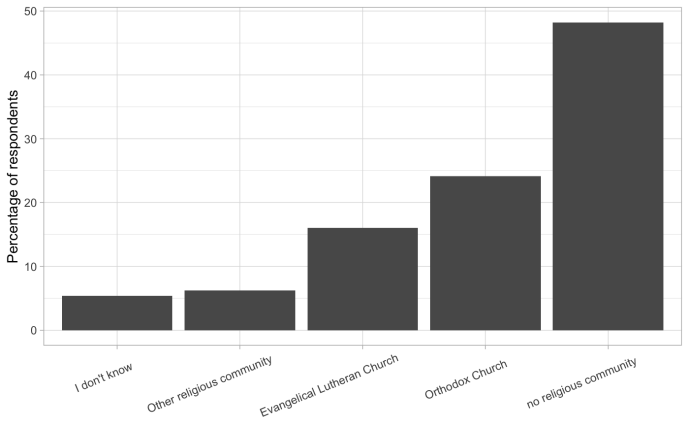

Figure 8.2: Membership in religious organisations

The survey I conducted in 2019 confirmed the low rate of church membership among Russian-speakers. However, the membership numbers in this data are considerably higher than those in found in the official statistics, with 16 percent of survey respondents saying they belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 25 percent to the Orthodox Church, 6 percent to another religious community, and 49 percent reporting they do not belong to any religious community (see figure 8.2). It is highly unlikely that church membership among Russian-speakers would have more than doubled between 2015 and 2019 - rather, it is probable that, at least for some respondents, belonging signifies something other than what is meant by it in the realm of the official statistics.[5]

This hypothesis is supported by the interviews I conducted with the representatives of the Orthodox church, several of whom told me that many of their parishioners have not joined the congregation officially and that the relatively low official numbers do not reflect the realities of the parish life. Here, it should once again be noted that the Finnish system of 'official church membership' is unfamiliar to many migrants, including those from post-Soviet countries, and may thus create confusion. In fact, eight respondents said they did not know whether or not they belong to a religious community. [6]

[5] Of course, as discussed in chapter 3, the possibility that members of religious organisations were more likely than non-members to respond to the survey also has to be considered.

[6] The survey data also shows that 6 percent of the respondents belong to another religious community. Three people said they belong to the Pentecostal Church. Catholic, Baptist and Russian Orthodox Church were all indicated by one respondent, although it should be noted that the question did not differentiate between Patriarchates and that, consequently,

In this context, it is clear that belonging should not only be approached through the prism of religious membership. Most interviewees (at least those who had spent their childhood outside of Finland) viewed their joining of the church as something that had happened at baptism and, with the benefit of hindsight, it would have been useful to include a separate question about baptism in the survey questionnaire. Equally important was the feeling of belonging, or the sense of a religious identity. In the interviews, it was used to refer both to identifying as a believer (or agnostic, or atheist) and to the feeling of belonging to a certain religious community regardless of one's 'actual' membership status (for instance, an interviewee who identifies as Orthodox, but has not officially joined an Orthodox parish). The survey data provided support for this distinction, particularly in the case of Orthodox churches: the share of those who identified as Orthodox (46 percent) was notably higher than the number of those who reported belonging to an Orthodox church (25 percent).

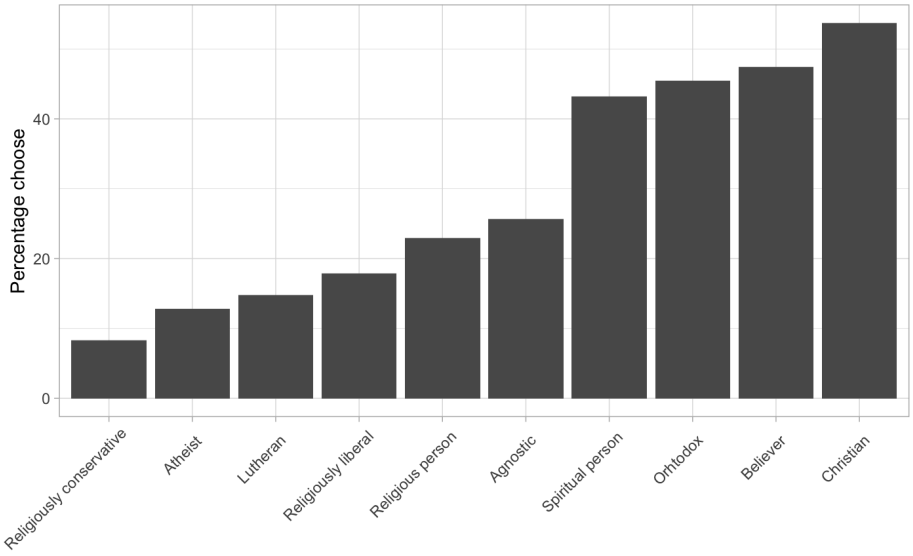

Figure 8.3: Religious identity among survey respondents. N.B.: Each respondent could choose multiple options.

When talking about religious identity, one should not forget those who identify as non-religious. It is sometimes assumed that the absence of religious affiliation or belief is a lesser identifying force than their presence, but the interviews suggest that this is not always the case. Zhanna, who identified as an

the number for 'Orthodox Church' presented above may also include members of the ROC. One person said they belong to an Evangelical mission, one said that she thinks of herself as Orthodox even though she does not officially belong to the Church, and one indicated both Orthodox and Lutheran Churches.

atheist, described it as an integral part of her and her social circle's worldview. Equally, it is important to note that religious identity does not only consist of how one identifies in terms of religion and religious denomination (Orthodox/Lutheran/Buddhist/none, etc.) and belief (believer/agnostic/atheist), but also in relation to religiousness itself. As the fieldwork progressed, it soon became clear to me that 'being religious' meant different things to different people, and that my own preconceptions of what made someone religious did not always correspond with the person's own views. I will discuss this finding in more detail below.

8.3.3 Practising

According to the survey, prayer is the most common form of religious practice among Russian-speakers, often engaged in also by those respondents who do not attend religious services (and sometimes even those who are not certain of their belief in God). Nearly half of the survey respondents said they pray at least a few times a month, and 28 percent reported praying daily. By contrast, less than six percent said they read the Bible every day.

These results suggest that Russian-speakers engage in prayer more frequently than Finnish residents as a whole. In a study conducted in Finland in 2019 (Salomäki et al. 2020), half of respondents reported praying at least once a year (compared with 57 percent of respondents in this study) and a quarter at least once a week (compared with 37 percent in this study), including the 17 percent who reported praying daily.[7]

The importance of prayer for Russian-speakers also emerged in the interviews. Several interviewees mentioned having icons or even an 'icon corner' (красный угол), an Orthodox home altar, in their homes. This icon corner could become the centre of private practice, with interviewees reciting prayers and sometimes lighting votive candles, bought from a church or a monastery, in front of it. Some interviewees mentioned engaging in these practices together with their family members.

The icon corners typically include icons of Christ, of Theotokos, the Mother of God, and of other saints – particularly those of the so-called name-giving or patron saints, viewed as intercessors and heavenly protectors, or other saints to whom the family members have formed a particular attachment (see Luehrmann 2018, p. 134). Thus, the selection of icons varies from person and family to another. Some icons had been in the interviewees' families for a long time. Others were received as gifts, purchased at churches or monasteries, or brought as souvenirs from foreign travels.

It has to be noted that the icon corner did not have to be - and often was not - in a literal corner. For instance, in one interviewee's family icons were kept on a shelf above the entertainment centre in the living room, while another mentioned keeping icons on her bookshelf. Tamara had bought a separate

[7]However, the share of those who said they never pray was 33 percent among Finnish residents as a whole (Salomäki et al. 2020) and 36 percent among the respondents of this study.

glass-door cabinet for this purpose. On the upper shelf, she placed the icons, a candle, and a prayer book. The lower shelves were reserved for Orthodox literature and miscellaneous religious items, such as additional candles, a vigil lamp, holy water, and the bottled remnants of the oil used in her baptism. Even though she did not pray every day, Tamara liked having a dedicated space for these items, instead of 'having everything scattered around the house'. In the Orthodox tradition in particular, the 'sacred act of praying is kept apart from everyday activities through its canonical, traditional forms and through the sensory manipulations that accompany it: lighting of candles, physical displacement to nearby or remote sacred places, shutting out external distractions through the use of a prayer book or icons' (Luehrmann 2018, p. 12) - a tendency reflected in Tamara's desire to reserve a special place for the ritual of prayer and to separate it from the bustle of everyday life.

But prayer, the fieldwork suggested, could also be incorporated into everyday activities, particularly when busy schedules prevented interviewees from reserving a lot of time for religious practice in their day-to-day lives. For example, simply making a sign of the cross (перекреститься) could be understood as both a prayer in itself and a confession of faith.

Wearing of a cross pendant was another practice easily integrated into the daily life. Several interviewees mentioned that they 'never' took off their cross, but the meaning of this practice varied from person to person. Some believed that the cross helped protect them against misfortune, while others, like Tamara, saw it as a sign of faith.

> I never take the cross (крестик) off. Only when I was under operation, I had to take it off, it was mandatory. [Other than that,] I'm always with the cross. And I think I will teach the children to do the same.
>
> [Interviewer:] Do you believe that it protects you, and the kids?
>
> No. I believe that God protects us. But we took the cross on us, and we have to wear it. It's a sign of faith. Christ carried a cross, and we also carry a small cross.

At the same time, and as mentioned above, not everyone viewed wearing of a cross as religious practice. In fact, it was not always easy to define what makes a practice religious. For instance, meditation and yoga emerged in the accounts of the interviewees both as completely secular activities and as spiritual (although never explicitly religious) experiences. Listening to religious music could be understood as a religious experience, a cultural one, or both at the same time.

Similarly, while I have here classified domestic prayer as private practice to separate it from participation in public services, it should be noted that the border between practice and participation was often blurred, as in the case of the interviewee who said they did not usually 'go to church' in terms of attending services but nevertheless frequently visited different churches to light a candle or just to say a quick prayer. This happened in public, but was inherently a private act, in contrast to prayers pronounced out loud at liturgies and other services. Correspondingly, a prayer recited in the privacy of one's home could

be a communal event when shared by one's family members, as described above, but also in other circumstances. For instance, it was not uncommon to invite priests, and sometimes other close parishioners, to one's house for rituals such as consecration of a new home.

Luehrmann (2018, p. 136) has described a recited prayer as both a private and a collective affair, something often done for others - such as prayers for the health of loved ones - and with others and thus offering 'the simultaneous possibility of communal experience *and* quiet withdrawal'. Kravchenko (2018) has made similar observations with regard to icons that, she argues, allow Russian Orthodox parishioners in the United States to maintain connection with both friends and relatives in Russia and a larger Russian Orthodox community. Luehrmann refers specifically to prayers read from a book of prayers, found in many Orthodox homes, such as at Tamara's home altar. Luehrmann (2018, p. 136) argues that reciting these prayers enables the believer to shift to automatic thinking, encountering words of others who have prayed before and thus connecting each prayer 'to a transtemporal community that goes beyond those gathered together at a given place and time'. I would argue that this also applies to those not praying 'by the book', in particular where either certain oral prayers or the habit of praying has been taught to the person by others, such as (as was often the case for interviewees who had grown up in the Soviet Union) by their grandmothers.

The borders between private practice and public participation were further blurred at the very end of my fieldwork in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced many religious organisations to close their doors and move at least part of their services online. For instance, between April and December 2020, the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki streamed over 90 services online from the Holy Trinity Church - the centre of the parish's Church Slavonic services - alone. Unsurprisingly, the Easter services were particularly popular, and their comment sections were filled with people sharing Easter greetings in various languages (see section 9.3.4). Russian-language masses were also streamed live every week by a ROC church and Lutheran parish based in Helsinki. Of course, attendance at any of these virtual services was not tied to location - they could be frequented from all over Finland as well as abroad, making attendance easier for those for whom getting to churches for live services was difficult or impossible. Among others, this provided an interesting opportunity for Russian-speakers based outside of the capital region and other big cities, some of whom, as I will show later in this chapter, were usually prevented from attending services as often as they would have wanted either due to long distances or due to lack of Russian and/or Church Slavonic services and resources in their parish.

As the live streams remained visible on YouTube and/or Facebook after the service, they were also not necessarily tied to a certain time and date but could be watched (and re-watched) at the participants' convenience. In fact, data from Lutheran parishes suggests that virtual services held during the pandemic are viewed by more people than used to attend live services pre-COVID (Salomäki et al. 2020, p. 101). Based on conversations I had with both Finnish- and Russian-speaking Orthodox parishioners in the Autumn of 2020, not all previ-

ously active church members have made a habit of participating in the streamed services, and some missed the social dimension of regular participation. At the same time, however, the streams provided parishioners with a pressure-free way to practice their religion, as they did not need to leave their homes to attend them and could even leave the service running in the background while they were simultaneously doing something else. According to the parish newspaper (Ortodoksiviesti 1/2021), the streamed services of the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki received over 100 000 views in 2020.

While the 'online turn' forced by the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented in its scale, it has to be noted that it was by no means the first time social media resources had been employed for and by Finland's Russian-speakers in the context of religion. I observed both top-down and bottom-up examples of this during my fieldwork. For instance, in 2019 one of the people I had interviewed invited me to join a Russian-speaking prayer group on WhatsApp. At the time of my joining, the group included a couple of dozen members. Nearly every morning, one of the administrators would send the group a message about the Orthodox calendar for the day, including information on saints, feasts, and Bible readings for that day. This initial message was followed by the readings in their entirety. Group members often acknowledged the messages with emojis of the Orthodox cross or the praying hands. The group was also sometimes used to ask for prayers and to distribute information on services, such as times when the Russian-speaking priest was available for the sacrament of penance or confession, once again lowering the border between practice and participation.

8.3.4 Participating

Participation was less common than either belief or private practice both among interviewees and among survey respondents. Only 11 percent of respondents participated in worship services at least once a month, and only five percent did so weekly. While several interviewees who did not usually attend religious services said they did so for special occasions such as Easter or Christmas, more than 40 percent of survey respondents said they had not participated in any worship services in recent years. These figures do not include participation in other events organised in or by religious organisations, such as church concerts, religious ceremonies like weddings and baptisms, and volunteering in the parish. Surprisingly, a quarter of respondents said they participate in such volunteer work at least once a year - a considerably high number when compared to the share of those taking part in religious services and one that may be explained by the interviews, which suggest that even those who do not regularly attend services may be interested in supporting the philanthropic work of the churches.

Despite the relatively low overall numbers of participation among the survey respondents, the figures are quite similar to and in some cases higher than those of the majority population. Recent studies (Salomäki et al. 2020) show that around six percent of Finns attend religious services monthly, including the two percent who do so weekly. Overall, 32 percent of Finnish residents attend religious services at least once a year, while 42 percent had not done so once in

recent years. As is to be expected, participation is more common among those who belong to a religious organisation, although there seem to be notable differences between churches, with Orthodox Finns attending church more frequently than Lutherans: while only 8 percent of those belonging to Lutheran congregations attended religious services monthly, 28 percent of members of Orthodox churches did so (Salomäki et al. 2020).

My data suggests that the frequency of religious participation is higher among those officially belonging to a religious community also in the case of Finland's Russian-speaking minority. Out of the survey respondents who reported belonging to a religious organisation, 52 percent participate in activities organised by and in their parish - including religious services and ceremonies, children's clubs, bible circles, and other similar activities - at least once a year, and 21 percent do so monthly or more often. This number is higher than that of all Finnish residents, but lower than that of the Orthodox Finns. At the same time, the fieldwork suggests that participation does not necessarily follow denominational lines. In fact, many participate in religious and social events organised by parishes without officially belonging to them, as I will discuss in the next section.

Participating without belonging

During the fieldwork, several church employees (in particular those working in the Orthodox church) suggested that the official membership statistics do not reflect the levels of participation in church activities, with the latter described as considerably higher. The survey results seem to support this view. For instance, nearly one tenth of survey respondents said they had participated in activities organised by the Catholic church, yet no respondents indicated that they were members of the Catholic church. Similarly, while only 25 percent of respondents said they belong to an Orthodox church (in itself a noticeably higher number than the 13 percent recorded in the official statistics), nearly 70 percent said they participate or have at some point participated in activities organised by either the Finnish Orthodox church, the Russian Orthodox church, or both.

I also encountered this phenomenon when out in the field - once surprisingly close to home. One day during fieldwork, I was having lunch in Helsinki with a Russian-speaking friend when she told me she had just joined the Orthodox church so that she could become a Godmother to her friend's newborn baby. I was confused - we had first got to know each other as 15-year-olds at a church camp, organised by the Orthodox parish for its teenagers so that they would not feel left out of the Lutheran confirmation camp tradition.[8] We had also attended several follow-up camps for young parishioners together. Yet my friend was now saying that she had in fact never officially been a member of the church. 'They

[8]In Orthodoxy, the sacrament of Confirmation or Chrismation takes place immediately following the Baptism. In the Finnish Lutheran tradition, Confirmation is a public affirmation of faith that usually takes place after the 8th grade and gives a church member several rights, such as the right to become a godparent. The confirmation camps are popular 'coming of age' rites in Finland, attended by around 80 percent of the country's 15-year-olds each year.

never asked me if I was a member,' she shrugged. 'I think they thought that if you're a Russian-speaker, you must be Orthodox.'

When I mentioned my friend's experience to the Orthodox priests I interviewed as part of my fieldwork, I learnt that, at least in some cases, the church or individual priests have made conscious decisions to ignore the membership requirements when organising activities or performing rites. One reason for this is the awareness of the differences in how religious membership is understood in different countries. As explained above, the Finnish system, in which people officially become members of the church and pay taxes on the basis of this membership, is not in place in other Orthodox countries, and is, consequently, unfamiliar to many Orthodox immigrants. This also has to be taken into account when looking at the membership numbers from the survey - it is possible that some of the respondents who indicated they are members of a certain church do not show up in the official membership statistics because the meaning of 'belonging to a religious community' often gets lost in translation.

One of the Orthodox priests I spoke with mentioned another potential reason for the mismatch between membership and participation numbers: bureaucracy related to the process of migration. In a situation where church membership is related to residence permit, the lack of official registration (both in Finland and in the church) was not treated as a sine qua non for receiving parish services:

> It's important for a minority church like us that people register, that we can show to the outside how many of us there are. [–] But it's about how you present this to people and how they can understand what it's about... some priests are more active with it, others think that it's a side issue. In the Lutheran church this was a high barrier, for them the registration was an absolute requirement. There are cases where I know that they have refused to baptise a child when the parents are not registered or don't want to get registered. Since we are a small church, we treat [all parishioners] as Orthodox, whether they are on the register or not. Especially in the 90s, when it all started and was a bit chaotic, some Orthodox congregations circumvented the law a bit when it came to baptising children. Because becoming a member of the church, it also depends on the residence permit. Because the church registry is tied to the state. It was something like that. So there was a stack of 'waiting' [applications] in the bureau but they are [treated as] members of the Church. This was far more flexible than in the Lutheran congregation.

The interviewer distinguishes between practices of the Lutheran and the Orthodox church, with the former presented as less flexible on the issue of official membership requirements. Nevertheless, there seems to be at least some flexibility on this also among Lutheran parishes: for instance, an article published in Finland's largest Lutheran parish newspaper talks about the role that the church has played in the acculturation of a Russian-speaking interviewee, who among other things talks about how volunteering with the Russian language

parish work has helped her adapt to life in Finland (Kytöharju 2020). The fact that the interviewee is not a member of the Lutheran church is only mentioned in passing and seems to not have prevented her from taking on a rather active role in the parish.

In any case, it seems that religious organisations in Finland are often actively thinking of ways to attract migrants to their parishes and, in particular, to convert participants into official members. When discussing the role of religion in the lives of migrants, the importance of migrants in and for religious communities should not be forgotten, particularly in areas where religious participation and membership are otherwise declining. In the Finnish context, this has been particularly notable within the Orthodox church. While the membership of the Lutheran church has fallen from 90.3 percent of Finland's population in 1980 to 68.6 percent of the population in 2020, the share of Orthodox Finns has stayed stable at around 1.1 percent - largely thanks to migrant parishioners, a significant share of whom have moved to Finland from Russia and other Russian-speaking countries. In fact, in 2019 Russian-speaking members made up around 15 percent of the membership of the Finnish Orthodox Church (Hattunen 2020).

With this in mind, it is interesting that 13 percent of those survey respondents who did not currently belong to any church or religious community said it was likely that they would at some point join the Orthodox church, with further 7 percent indicating that they have often thought about joining the church but are not entirely sure if they will do so. The same figures for the Lutheran church were 7 and 8 percent, respectively. At the same time, 23 and 22 percent said they could under no circumstances think about joining the Orthodox and the Lutheran church, respectively.

With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been interesting to also ask whether the respondents had thought about leaving the church, and if yes, for what reason(s). In January 2019, it was reported that the absolute membership numbers of the Finnish Orthodox church had declined for a sixth year in a row to the lowest levels seen since 2002. Some months earlier, a popular Finnish tabloid newspaper *Iltalehti* had reported that 'Russians' were leaving the Finnish Orthodox Church, suggesting a connection between this and the political disagreements between Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox churches as well as the consequent deterioration of relations between the Moscow and the Constantinople Patriarchates. The article went as far as suggesting that the divisions had lead to 'some degree of mass exodus of Russians from the Orthodox Church of Finland', citing a spokeswoman saying that a few dozen parishioners with Russian background had resigned from the Finnish Orthodox church (Tuominen 2018).

Yet a Finnish Orthodox priest I spoke with shortly after the article was published was dismissive of the claims made in it. He had a more prosaic explanation for the pre-Christmas surge in resignations: according to him, people often leave the church at the end of the year to avoid being taxed in the next calendar year, often just to return to the church at a later date.[9]

[9]The income-based church tax is collected by the Lutheran and the Finnish Orthodox

Church tax is often the object of public debates in Finland, but it did not seem like a particularly important issue for the Russian-speakers I spoke with during my fieldwork. Out of the former, current and potential future parishioners I interviewed, only one mentioned taxes as a contributing (though not the only) reason for her decision to not belong to a church. At the same time, some respondents explicitly mentioned they were happy to pay the church tax - Oleg so much so that he had joined the Lutheran church despite having a critical stance towards religion and identifying as an atheist so that he could support its work through his taxes.

8.4 A believer, not religious: personal versus organised religion

As mentioned above, many of the Russian-speakers I spoke with distinguished between faith and religion. Often, they also highlighted the difference between *верующий* (veruiushchii) - someone who believes - and *религиозный* (religioznyi) - someone who is religious; whereas the former connotes inner faith, the latter relates more to the organised forms of religion and the following of certain rules and traditions.

Anya touched upon this difference when talking about her family back in Russia:

> They're not... church-ised. They are believers, but they don't go to church, they don't participate in the parish life.

While less than a quarter of the survey respondents said they would classify themselves as religious, nearly half indicated that they identified as a believer. (Notably, while the latter figure is higher than the former, it is still noticeably lower than the share of those who say they believe in God.) As already mentioned in the section 'Believing without participating' above, this tendency to highlight the importance of faith and beliefs over organised forms of religion is not unique to Russian-speakers or to the Finnish context.

Such division between (personal) belief and (organisational) religion is also reminiscent of the well-known framework of intrinsic versus extrinsic religious orientation (Allport 1966), in which intrinsic or internally oriented religiosity is used to refer to the viewing of religion as a value and an end in itself, while those with extrinsic orientation are seen to approach it in more instrumentalist terms, as a means to other ends (Donahue 1985; Power and McKinney 2014). The framework has been criticised for conceptual ambiguity and for 'the value-laden "good-religion-versus-bad-religion" distinction' underlying it (Kirkpatrick

Churches, and added on top of an individual's other taxes (municipal and state tax). The tax rate is decided by the congregations and consequently varies based both on the church and the location. Notably, the tax charged by the Orthodox Church is often higher than that of the Lutheran Church in the same locality; for example, in the capital, Helsinki, the church tax rate for 2020 was 1.8 percent for the Orthodox and 1.0 percent for the Lutheran congregation.

and Hood 1990, p. 442). In fact, while this was not usually explicitly stated by the people I spoke with, I soon formed the impression that being a believer was generally positioned in a more positive light than being a religious person. Organised or institutional religion was often viewed and described not only as an expression or a logical extension of someone's personal faith, but also as a sign of instrumentalist approach to religion, as means to non-religious and 'worldly' ends, such as gaining social acceptance. In some accounts, it was connected with hypocrisy and inauthenticity.

Ammerman (2013) has argued that the categorisation behind 'spiritual-not-religious' can be understood as moral boundary work and that, while of great importance for understanding contemporary religion, it should be treated as a moral and political category rather than an empirical one. What does the tendency to underline importance of faith over official religion say about the role of religion in our societies? In fact, I would argue that highlighting the role of spirituality over religiosity, as often done by both interviewees and survey participants in my sample, may reflect the hegemonic cultural scripts of talking about religion (Ammerman 2013) in which ideas of 'traditional' religiosity are often laden with negative connotations while 'spirituality' is seen in a more neutral or even positive light.

However, just as the fieldwork showed that there are different grades and shades to being a believer (верующий), it also revealed that being religious (религиозный) is not a binary option between religious and non-religious but rather a scale that can and often does slide to either direction depending on the context and the point of comparison. (This also goes for other identities surrounding religion - for instance, someone may feel they are religiously liberal in Russia but somewhat religiously conservative in Finland.) Moreover, the understanding of what it means to 'be religious' can vary between people. For instance, I was somewhat surprised that Yakov, a 50-year-old Orthodox parishioner whom I was introduced to during a religious service, described himself not as religious but as near-religious. This was surprising not only because we'd met in a church, but also because he told me he prayed often, was a believer, and had been baptised in the Soviet Russia. Yakov explained:

> Unfortunately, I don't give religion as much time as a religious person would. I am Orthodox, I pray and everything... but I'm not completely religious.

For some respondents, being religious translated into membership or acted as an identity marker. For others, like Yakov, it was something to be earned. For them, you could not claim religiousness unless you followed certain practices, regardless of whether you had been baptised or officially belonged to a church or a parish. This idea was often expressed alongside regret for not being more religiously active or not attending services more frequently. In this sense, being a believer appeared easier - it only required belief, not action.

8.5 Religious diversity and syncretism

Syncretism, or the mixing and hybridisation of different religious beliefs and practices, has for long been recognised as one of the characteristic features of the post-Soviet religious space. The fall of the state-sponsored atheism was seen by many to have lead to a free-for-all 'buffet' of different, previously restricted religions and worldviews from which people chose the elements that were to their liking without concerning themselves with denominational borders (fieldwork interviews).

This interpretation, while widely shared, has been criticised as overly simplistic. In any case, it has to be highlighted that 'religious tuning' (Salomaa 2019) also happens in Western countries, and that neither the mixing of religions nor the uneasiness about it are new phenomena. In fact, syncretism has sometimes been used as a pejorative term by those concerned with the 'purity' of religious beliefs. On the other hand, some researchers have expressed concerns that the focus on syncretism may lead to erroneous assumptions of existence of a 'pure' form of religion or culture instead of the recognition that everything in culture is inherently syncretistic (Pandian 2006, p. 229).

While the usefulness of the concept has thus been questioned, I believe that it can be valuable in challenging the idea of religious borders as immutable and impenetrable, and of different religions as inherently mutually incompatible. During the fieldwork, syncretism emerged as a natural consequence of the lived reality in which people grow up, interact and live together with members of many different confessions. Many had family members, partners and friends who were of different faith or had a different take on religion. Some had grown up in interfaith homes, where parents (or other family members) belonged to different religions or one parent was religiously affiliated while the other was not. Some identified with more than one religion or denomination themselves. Accounts of attending events by more than one religious organisation were also common in both the survey and the interview data. For instance, Laura said that her grandmother enjoyed social events organised by the churches so much that she attended them in both Lutheran and Orthodox parishes.

In any case, ecumenical orientation - focus on the common ground of different denominations - was widespread among the interviewees, and while it does not necessarily lead to syncretism, for many it highlighted the common conviction, discussed above, that faith was more important than ecclesiastical purity. It has to be noted, however, that attending events from different congregations, coming from a mixed religious background or growing up in an interfaith home did not necessarily lead to syncretism of religious beliefs or to identifying with more than one religion. It could even have the contrary effect, as was the case with Anya.

An Orthodox woman in her early twenties, Anya had grown up in a family with an Orthodox mother and an atheist father and said that the different religious backgrounds and beliefs of her parents had sometimes caused problems within the family - so much so that she and her mother refrained from discussing their religious convictions with her father in order to avoid 'unpleasant conver-

Observance of traditional folk beliefs, percentage of respondents					
Belief	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Wood	17.2	20.5	27.4	23.7	11.2
Departure	18.4	15.7	19.4	24.4	22.1
Forgotten items	36.9	19.6	18.2	18.2	7.0
Mirror	27.2	14.3	16.6	19.4	22.6
Black cat	51.2	17.7	16.7	9.3	5.1

Table 8.1: Observance of traditional folk beliefs

sations'. At the same time, her father's negative attitude towards religion had only strengthened Anya's determination to live life 'according to her own beliefs'. Her feelings were further underpinned by her experience of dating a man from another religion. While at first she had felt that they had a lot in common due to sharing the experience of migration and belief in God, Anya soon found herself in a situation that reminded her of her childhood home, where different religious views had not integrated but clashed and where religion had consequently become a controversial and unpleasant topic. This, combined with the experience with her father, had lead Anya to decide that it would be better for her to date someone of her own faith. She had found that men, whether her father or her former partner, could try to impose their own beliefs and views on her, and did not want to have to justify her religion in a future relationship. For her, she said, it was 'the fundamental level' that she could not let go of.

Anya's account shows that being exposed to religious diversity does not in itself necessarily lead to syncretism. There is also another important factor that has to be kept in mind when discussing religious syncretism: not everyone views it as a religious phenomenon. The claim, presented in chapter 4, that the majority of Russians 'believe in God, in astrology, in the transmigration of souls and in magic and numerous traditional Russian folk beliefs' (Kääriäinen 2009, p. 59) seems to also be true for many of Finland's Russian-speakers. However, the fieldwork suggests that these seemingly conflicting beliefs are not always thought of as incompatible, one of the reasons being that they are not all thought of as religious.

A good example of this is the adherence to Russian folk beliefs or superstitions, such as knocking on wood or sitting down before leaving for a journey: a majority of the interviewees and 90 percent of the survey respondents said they observed at least one such folk tradition (see table 8.1) - many, like Misha, adhered to several.[10] However, Misha, who identified as atheist, did not see these traditions as something religious, but as part of the folklore and a remnant of Russia's pagan past.

> Not whistling at home, knocking on wood, [symbolically] spitting

[10]In fact, a fifth of the respondents said they 'always' observed two or more of these traditions.

> three times... I do that.
>
> [interviewer] What about, for example, a black cat..
>
> Yes, but that's just for laughs. Very few people take it seriously nowadays. I won't change my route [if a black cat crosses the road], but if something happens later, I will say it was the black cat. But I'm not sure that it's religious... [–] it's part of the folklore, more of a pagan (языческое) tradition.

Like Misha, most interviewees viewed the folk traditions as something done out of habit instead of any real conviction or belief - in short, as practice without belief. At the same time, they admitted that forgetting to perform the 'ritual' could make them feel uncertain, even anxious. Maksim gave an example of this with reference to his tradition of sitting down in silence before embarking on a journey:

> We do it, but we have an ironic attitude towards it. For instance, we have a strict rule to sit [down before leaving] for a journey. My son asks me why we do it. If someone forgets it, the whole family will call out 'hey!', and everyone will sit down. We will laugh about it - look at us, we're sitting again.
>
> [interviewer] But you still do it - you laugh but you do it?
>
> We do it, because somehow it calms us. If you didn't sit down [before leaving], you will be nervous the whole way. [So] we will laugh, but we will sit.

While the majority of the respondents did not consider these folk traditions to be of religious nature, one interviewee said that she did not engage in them as they go against the teachings of the church. Overall, concerns like this were not widespread. In fact, Shterin (2016, p. 148) has argued that the religious beliefs of Russians 'tend to be both unorthodox and Orthodox at the same time, as well as both disconnected from the dominant Church and yet derived from the historically dominant religious culture'. From early on in the fieldwork I formed the impression that not all interviewees - even those who considered themselves religious - were well aware of church doctrines or differences between denominations or even found them particularly important. In fact, several people told me that, before moving to Finland, they had hardly paid any attention to differences between churches. I will discuss the experience of migration and the role it plays with relation to religion in the next section.

8.6 Religion, faith, and the experience of migration

The role of faith and religion in a person's life is not always static and permanent. Instead, it can change over time, particularly following big life events,

such as migration. In my data, the profile of changes in religiosity following migration varied depending on which domain of religion was examined. When it came to religious belief, interviewees reported two patterns: increase (including religious conversion) and no change. By contrast, four different profiles could be identified in the case of religious participation: those who reported no change following their move to Finland, those who had become more active, those who had become less active, and those whose activity had momentarily increased following the move but had since decreased again.

The pattern of the last profile, an initial increase followed by decrease, seemed to be related to faith-based organisations' active role in the initial stages of acculturation. For some interviewees, faith-based communities had been their first social contacts in Finland and also provided a lot of practical help (see chapter 9). In some cases, participation may have decreased (or stopped altogether) once the interviewees' social networks expanded and/or once they started a job or a study programme and no longer had as much time to dedicate to religion. This pattern was reported mostly by those who had arrived in Finland in the 1990s, as majority of the more recent migrants said they had not been approached by any religious organisations in Finland; the implications of this will be discussed in more detail below.

When it comes to the decrease in religious activity following migration, this was most often related either to practical challenges with attending services or to (how the interviewees viewed) the societal position of religion in Finland. In the first case, respondents often expressed regret for not being able to attend services as often as they wished due to, for example, language (see chapter 5) or distance from the nearest parish. By contrast, those citing the second reason often said that it was easier to be non-religious in Finland than it had been in their previous country of residence.

Increase in religious activity was also explained by several factors. In addition to the factors discussed above - religious organisations reaching out to and providing social and practical support to migrants - interviewees mentioned religious freedom, religious conversion, and lack of distractions in Finland. All of these will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

At the same time, it is not always possible to assess to what extent these shifts relate to the experience of migration and what role other potential explanatory factors play in the process. Notably, some of the Finland-raised interviewees also reported experiencing changes or fluctuations relating to faith and religious activity, although in their cases these were generally smaller and more gradual. In any case, as will be shown later on in this chapter, the role of practical considerations - such as time, space and language - should not be discounted or ignored.

8.6.1 Finding faith in Finland

Notable in the case of those interviewees who had become (more) religious in Finland was the importance given to this in their accounts. In fact, several interviewees said that they were happy they had moved to Finland precisely

because it had brought them (closer) to the church and to their faith. Jelena, a 68-year-old pensioner who had lived in Finland for over 20 years, expressed thankfulness to Finland for 'allowing' her to practice her religion.

> In Russia, my faith was somehow a taboo. I couldn't... It was a completely closed topic. And here, I opened it, and not only with Russians, with Finns too.

Jelena's feelings reflect her experiences as a believer in the Soviet Union, where she had to hide her religion or face disciplinary action, as will be discussed in the next section. But the idea of the move to Finland as 'the pathway to church' and the gratefulness for this was also present in the narratives of Tamara, a young woman who had not experienced the state-enforced atheism of the Soviet Union.

Tamara had come to Orthodoxy as an adult, following a long period of searching which she described in the following way:

> I was always in search of God, but I had not joined any religion. I had Somali friends, then [I also learnt about Islam] through my husband, I became interested and then I decided - why shouldn't I be a Muslim? So I went to a mosque [–] and became a Muslim. I started wearing a scarf, dressing accordingly. But then I started thinking... I don't feel anything, just emptiness. I was praying, where is God... there are so many religions, where should I go? I am confused in all of these religions. [—] I started spending time with Jehovah's Witnesses [—] but then I realised that's not it either, there was too much psychological pressure. So I started distancing myself from them, although they didn't let me go immediately, they wanted me to come back. Then came the Mormons, do you know them? They're also good people and interesting, but that also wasn't it, of course.

Having moved to Finland as a school-aged child following her mother's marriage to a Finnish man, Tamara had faced a lot of exclusion and discrimination in her small rural hometown (see chapter 7). In our interviews, she was very open about the struggles she had faced as a young migrant woman and about wanting to eventually move away from Finland, where she felt she lacked social contacts and did not feel fully accepted or understood. However, she saw finding faith as the silver lining of having had to move away from Russia, where she recalled having many friends and a generally 'better life':

> I was born in Russia, I never wanted to move here, I never knew that Finland existed [laughs]. I would have remained in Russia, got education there. But... I'm not sure if I would have become religious in Russia. Maybe a lot would have distracted me there. In Finland, I had time to think.

Tamara had come to church following a long process of searching and having personally sought out different religious communities. By contrast, some interviewees were approached by various religious organisations soon after their arrival in Finland. This seemed to be the case particularly for Ingrian Finnish remigrants in the 1990s; several interviewees recalled representatives of religious organisations being present in one way or another in spaces aimed at Ingrian Finnish remigrants and their families.

In any case, when it comes to religion, the experience of the more recent immigrants was quite different from that of those who had arrived in Finland in the 1990s. While many of the latter mentioned religious organisations reaching out to them, this was generally not the case for the former: by and large, if the interviewees had not been religious before moving to Finland and consequently sought out a religious community themselves, they had not been contacted by any parishes or churches (with the exception of Jehovah's Witnesses, representatives of whom several interviewees mentioned as being more active). Anton, while generally happy about what he viewed as a 'laid-back attitude towards religion' in Finland, saw this as a missed opportunity for religious organisations: 'If I would be giving them advice as a consultant, I'd have a lot of advice to give'.

The difference in interviewees' experiences may be explained by the shift of focus at the level of religious organisations. If in the 1990s Russian-speakers, and Ingrian Finnish remigrants in particular, were a centre of attention for acculturation work of many parishes, several church employees I spoke with during fieldwork reported that in recent years this focus had shifted to other minority groups. In a recent poll asking Lutheran parishes to name the ethnic and cultural groups for which they organise activities, only one in ten parishes reported organising activities for Russians, and only eight percent said they had organised activities in Russian language (compared to 12 percent for Arabic and 36 percent for English) (Salomäki et al. 2020).

In the context of family work of the Lutheran church, Salomäki (2019) has asked an interesting question: while parishes regularly invite their members to participate in different events, such as religious services aimed at newborn babies, do they have any activities or strategies aimed at unbaptised children and others who are not (yet) members of the church? The question is particularly relevant with relation to migrant families who, as shown above, are not necessarily familiar with the Finnish system of official church membership and who, as will be discussed in the following chapters, often disclose feelings of loneliness and could thus benefit from social activities organised by the parishes. While both survey results and interviews suggest that not all of those who expressed a desire for a more active social life would be interested in taking part in activities organised by religious organisations even if they did receive an invitation, many - even those who had a fairly critical view of religion - did express an openness to this. Anton, for example, said he would be happy to attend events organised by churches if they were about making social connections or learning Finnish language, even if this meant 'listening to someone talk about religion for a few minutes in the beginning'.

8.6.2 'I didn't know anything' - confusion surrounding religion

One theme that emerged from the accounts of many interviewees was an initial sense of confusion relating to religion. This confusion was usually experienced in the first months or years following the move to Finland and had later been dispersed as the interviewees became more 'religiously literate'.

For example, Jelena recalled that representatives of several parishes had visited the shared accommodation complex that she and her husband had first been assigned to after their move to Finland and invited them to attend religious services, an offer that she had been happy to take up. She had not, however, initially realised that these parishes were not part of the Orthodox church.

> I didn't go to Russian church in those times. I just got, from grandma, the faith in God. But I was always scared of ending up somewhere that's not Orthodox. So here [in Finland], when we came to the Lutheran church, at first I gave it so much attention [–] I didn't know anything, so I was thinking that I will probably start going here. Then I heard that it's Lutheran, and that was it, immediately.

In addition to the mainstream Lutheran church, Jelena also recalled visiting a Catholic church and some smaller Protestant congregations not long after arriving in Finland. While she had good memories of the churches she visited 'on her way' to the FOC parish where she eventually became an active member, her interest in them had evaporated once she had realised that they were not Orthodox, the religion that her grandmother had taught her.

Like Jelena, several interviewees recalled 'trying out' different churches and parishes without always understanding that they represented separate religious organisations, and many described the confusion they felt around religion in the first months or years following their arrival in Finland. The denominational and patriarchate-level differences, sometimes deemed important by the clergy, were often unnoticeable to the new parishioners. This was sometimes true also for those interviewees who identified not just as believers, but also as religious. As one Orthodox interviewee put it:

> In the beginning I didn't even know the difference between the Moscow patriarchate and the Greek patriarchate.

This early disorientation was probably reflective of its time and the general confusion that surrounded religion in the post-Soviet context during the early 1990s. By and large, it was not shared by the more recent immigrants. On the other hand, the young non-religious interviewees did not necessarily consider familiarity with the state church(es) to be of central importance for adapting to life in Finland, as evidenced by the following snippet from a conversation between two friends that I interviewed:

> [Interviewee 1]: Honestly, I don't even know what religion Finland has... Well, I know that it's close to Christianity, but what church specifically...
>
> [Interviewee 2]: Lutheran, I think.

8.6.3 Religion in Finland vs Religion in other countries

Attitudes, customs and laws relating to religion vary by country, and the secularised and privatised societal position of religion in Finland (Martikainen 2004, p. 79) was often reflected in the interviewees' accounts. In general, both religious and non-religious participants agreed that attitudes towards religion were more liberal in Finland than they were in Russia or, in the case of those who remembered it, had been in the Soviet Union (but it has to be noted that experiences in Russia and the Soviet Union varied greatly from person to person, as I will discuss later in this section).

Among other things, interviewees mentioned that families and friends in Russia were more interested (and, in some cases, more pushy) when it came to religion. This pressure was felt in particular by those young interviewees who viewed themselves as non-religious, like Anton.

> [interviewer] Do you find it easier to be non-religious in Finland? Yes, much easier. There's no peer pressure. For starters, in Finland no one will even ask you about it.

As mentioned above, the view of the Finnish society as religiously liberal was shared by most interviewees. There was one notable exception, however: Zhanna, who identified as an atheist, was very critical of the position of the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches in Finland and the denominational education given in schools:

> My attitude towards the Finnish church is very negative... [—] That in Finland they start talking about religion already in the kindergarten, is, in my opinion, repulsive. A church should not be part of the state.

While other interviewees were not as direct in their criticism of the Finnish religious system, the tradition of denominational education in school was nevertheless questioned by several participants. As with other topics, critical statements towards any aspect of life in Finland were often softened by acknowledging that things were no better in other countries or in one's country of origin. For instance, after expressing dislike of the Finnish system of denominational religious classes, Alina expressed disappointment that religious education as a separate subject had also been recently introduced in Russian schools:

> I don't agree with this: it would be more interesting if it was just a general lesson of religion [where] you simply learn about the world and what happened, what people believed in... as in, I don't know,

> these people believed in forest fairies, these people had polytheism, right... But don't focus on one particular religion and say that that's the correct one.

This theme of the importance of religious freedom was repeated in many accounts. In general, with the exception of the interviewee who saw the Finnish system of denominational education as potentially discriminatory towards non-religious children, interviewees did not report any difficulty in practising their religion in Finland.[11] By contrast, the accounts from other countries, mostly Russia and the former Soviet Union, included several descriptions of lack of religious freedom as well as cases that could be read as religious discrimination (unrelated to a person's ethnic or national background).

In modern-day Russia, being religious was not in itself difficult, according to the interviewees' accounts - as long as one belonged to the 'right' religious community. Organisations relating to what are officially recognised as the 'four traditional religions of Russia' - Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism - (were seen to) hold a privileged position, while other religions are often disadvantaged. Some religious communities have even been banned from operating - this is the case for Jehovah's Witnesses, whom the Human Rights Watch (2020) says face 'nationwide persecution' in Russia. This precarious position was reflected in the accounts of the two JW interviewees.

By contrast, in the Soviet Union the lack of religious freedom affected people of all religions, although it should be noted that the situation varied quite significantly by region, denomination and decade.[12] These differences become evident when comparing Jelena's and Galya's accounts of practising religion in the Soviet times.

As mentioned earlier, Jelena recalled that being religious in the Soviet Union had required secrecy and 'being caught' could result in ridicule or more serious consequences. Two incidents, in particular, were still on her mind. One time early on in her career, her co-workers had accidentally caught her wearing a small cross that she kept hidden underneath her clothing (see section 5.3.3) and made disdainful comments about it. On another occasion, she was invited to explain herself in front of the party committee. This is how Jelena described this experience:

> The church at that time was required to give information on who goes to church, who baptises their children, who - God forbid - has a church wedding, all data was given to the committee of the party, and of the Komsomol.[13] [–] I was in the Komsomol, and later in the party. And so I was called out, but it was such a small circle

[11] This is in line with the findings of a study where Russian-speakers reported no religious discrimination in Finland (Vähemmistövaltuutettu 2010).

[12] In fact, such recollections are completely absent from the accounts of younger Soviet-born interviewees.

[13] Komsomol is the common abbreviation of the All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth, a youth organisation of the Soviet Communist Party aimed at young people between the ages of 14 and 28.

> of people that it didn't go anywhere. They were frightened that if people would hear that I baptised [my child] it would act as an example, because I was well respected at my job.

By contrast, Galya, who was of roughly the same generation as Jelena, said that religion had not been a taboo during her childhood and youth in Estonia. While acknowledging the accounts of religious repressions shared by many Russian-speakers in Finland, she herself did not have similar experiences:

> I've heard from many people that it was very difficult going to the church in the Soviet Union. In Estonia, it wasn't. [–] Because as much as I remember... We definitely went to the procession at Easter, to [the cathedral of] Alexander Nevsky. And in Narva I was taken [to church], and I was baptised in church. There weren't any problems.

The only negative experience Galya recalled had happened at school, where her chemistry teacher had 'accused' her of being religious, 'always screaming [– that] you are not in Komsomol, you are ruining my records, your parents are probably religious'. Yet she positioned that this behaviour did not particularly bother her: 'maybe if it had happened in the fifth grade it might have hurt me, but in the ninth grade I could not have cared less'.

8.6.4 The choice of parish

It was sometimes suggested to me during fieldwork that Russian-speakers' choice of parish could reflect their political opinions, so that the more 'Russia-oriented' people would attend the Russian Orthodox Church while those more 'Western-oriented' would choose the Finnish parishes. This idea - mostly expressed by people who were not themselves part of the Russian-speaking minority - was not supported by the interviews with Russian-speakers. In fact, one of the interviewees most openly critical of the Russian state was a member of and attended services in a Russian Orthodox parish. Notably, this interviewee did not identify as Russian, was quite critical of her fellow Russian-speaking migrants, and very critical of the Russian Federation. Religion, for her, transcended any national or political borders, a theme commonly repeated in the interviews.

Even when people did express a preference for attending services at a specific church, practical considerations were often the decisive factor when it came to the actual choice of parish. For Tamara, a young single mother, this choice was largely dictated by the needs of her children.

> [The church we go to] is good because it has a playroom for children, it's not as strict as other churches. But actually I like one church, it's located in [—], it's part of the Moscow patriarchate. I think I like it because it's closer to our Russian culture. But it's hard to go there with kids, the kids want to run around and jump, and it's not

> allowed there. Maybe when the children will be older... I would of course like to go to that church.
>
> [interviewer] You said it's closer to the Russian culture... how is this, how does this show?
>
> It's closer in that the women are dressed, well, how they're supposed to, the men as well, the women stand where they should stand, and so do the men... and of course there are more Russians there, you have a chance to chat with people.

Despite preferring the church operating under the Moscow patriarchate for both religious and social reasons, Tamara chose to attend services of the FOC as these were less strict when it came to the behaviour of children. At the same time, participation in the ROC parish would have presented her with the opportunity of conversing with fellow Russian-speakers, something she confessed to sorely missing both in the church that she usually went to and in her everyday life. Tamara's account illustrates that, for most interviewees, the choice of parish was based on various, sometimes conflicting preferences and considerations.

At the same time, as important as practical considerations could be, they were not the end-all. One of the aforementioned small town residents, Maksim, acknowledged that there was an active Lutheran church in his hometown that he could have attended as, in general, he was ecumenically oriented. Yet he disagreed with the Lutheran view on what was for him a central theological question.

> I don't make much difference between confessions. But... how to put it, from the point of view of their fundamental meaning, all three of these denominations are very different, and Orthodoxy is closer to me precisely in meaning. I find very unpleasant, or rather incorrect, the Lutheran concept that a person who comes to church, he is saved almost automatically. [–] Orthodoxy departs from [the understanding] that it will be more difficult to be saved [for those who go to church] than for those who are not part of the church at all.

Maksim's account of Orthodox believers 'having to work harder' is strikingly similar to that of an interviewee in Kravchenko's (2018) ethnographic study of a Russian Orthodox parish in the United States. Reflecting on the differences between Russian Orthodoxy and American Protestantism, the interviewee, Larissa, concludes: 'Protestants like comfort, they don't like that which is not comfortable. [In Orthodoxy] you have to stand, you have to fast, you have to go to confession. They don't think they have to do this since Jesus already paid for their sins' (Kravchenko 2018, p. 38). Kravchenko argues that this positioning helps juxtapose between 'here and there' and 'us and them'. While the above quote from Maksim highlights difference through theological factors rather than ethnic or national belongings, it can nevertheless be read as an example of identity construction, here built and reinforced through religious

discourse. I will return to the role of church in ethnic and national identity construction in the next chapter.

8.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have identified four actions through which religion gains significance in the everyday lives of Russian-speakers in Finland. The interviews show that the relationship between believing, belonging, practising and participating is not always straightforward. For example, someone who prays regularly, belongs to a church and attends religious services may view himself as 'only' quasi-religious because he feels he does not dedicate enough time to religion; someone who identifies as an atheist and teases his wife for believing in God may still belong to a church because he wants to support the work that it does with his tax contribution; and someone who is a member of the Lutheran church may choose to also attend events organised by the Orthodox church because she enjoys the social interaction so much. Even people actively involved in parish life are not necessarily 'official' members of the church.

The data also suggests that the importance of both faith and religion in a person's life is not static or fixed and can change following big life events, such as migration. A few interviewees said their move to Finland had allowed them to either find faith or to start practising their religion. None of the interviewees had become less religious as a consequence of their move, but a few said they did not attend religious events as often as they had used to do. There was a consensus among the younger interviewees, in particular, that being non-religious was easier in Finland than in their previous countries of residence.

While religious membership numbers are considerably lower among Russian-speakers than other Finns, the chapter suggests that this does not necessarily translate to lower frequency of belief, practice, or participation. In fact, some forms of practice and participation seem to be more common among Russian-speakers than the majority population. Nor should the membership or participation numbers be directly linked to religion's importance for members of Finland's Russian-speaking minority: There were some interviewees who described religion as their most significant orient and one of the most important aspects of their lives on both day-to-day and general levels, and some who said that it had virtually no role in their life. More often, however, religion emerged in the accounts of the interviewees as 'a part of life', not necessarily its most notable element, but nevertheless something that they held dear and turned to either more regularly or from time to time, particularly in times of difficulties or crises. While the role of religion - and of organised religion in particular - in the everyday lives of Finland's Russian-speakers should thus not be overplayed, the chapter has shown that it can be of great, even central importance for some Russian-speakers. It can also support their processes of acculturation in various ways, to be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 9

'You Had to Go Through it With Faith': the Relationship Between Acculturation and Religion

9.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the role of religion in the lives of Finland's Russian-speaking minority. In this chapter, the focus will be on the various ways in which religion in its many forms relates to their processes of acculturation and adaptation. Drawing on in-depth interviews, quantitative survey, and fieldwork among the Finnish Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, I outline five ways in which religion - as faith, as a sense of belonging, as practice and as participation - emerged as an important factor in the acculturation of Russian-speakers living in Finland.

Firstly, religious organisations and communities, as well as other networks gained through religion, can be a significant source of practical support for acculturating individuals. This type of assistance can be particularly relevant for first-generation migrants and remigrants in the early stages of the acculturation process, but the data suggests that such resources were also drawn on by long-term residents and Finland-raised interviewees, particularly in times of difficulties. Moreover, I will argue that providing worship services in minority languages, such as Russian, is in itself a form of practical assistance that is highly valued by the parishioners and can support acculturation through enabling religious participation on one hand and fostering a sense of feeling accepted in and belonging to the Finnish society on the other.

Secondly, religion can play an important role in both the construction and maintenance of ethnic and national identities. Traditionally, Lutheranism has

been viewed as a notable building block of Finnish and Ingrian Finnish identities (Miettinen 2004; Prindiville 2015), while Orthodox Christianity is understood to play a similar role in the construction of Russian national consciousness (Grigoryev and van de Vijver 2017; Gvosdev 2000; Turunen 2007). However, as I will show in this chapter, these connections are not unequivocal in the context of Russian-speakers living in Finland. Here, it is important to distinguish between the aims set by religious organisations and the lived reality of their members. For instance, while the Orthodox Church of Finland does not necessarily aim to foster connections with Russianness among its Russian-speaking members, some research participants nevertheless viewed FOC services as a place where they could 'connect with home'. Similarly, while some have argued that ROC parishes abroad aim to promote Russian nationalism, this was not generally the experience shared by the research participants nor their reason for attending ROC services. Interestingly, an emphasis on the universality of religion led to the highlighting of cosmopolitan and multicultural identities both among the research participants and the representatives of religious organisations. Thus, religion's relationship to identity is not restricted to ethnic and national levels; it can also support the sense of belonging to local, supranational and/or transnational communities.

These feelings of belonging relate to social adaptation, the third intersection of religion and acculturation to be discussed in this chapter. This theme is particularly important because, as outlined in chapter 5, the fieldwork revealed lack of social contacts to be one of the two main problems for the adaptation of Finland's Russian-speaking minority (the second, discrimination, will also be discussed in this chapter). Against this background, it is not surprising that both research participants and representatives of religious organisations highlighted the importance of social adaptation and the role of congregations in supporting it. Several interviewees emphasised the feeling of community present in their congregation. For some, their most important social connections had been formed in the context of religion. At the same time, some participants expressed disappointment at what they perceived as lack of social interaction with their fellow parishioners and recounted experiencing feelings of isolation and loneliness also within their religious communities.

The fourth area of focus of this chapter is religion's role in psychological adaptation. The themes that emerged from the data centred around faith as a mental resource and a source of meaning. This is directly related to the fifth and final category discussed in this chapter, religion's ability to act as a buffer against difficulties. In the case of Russian-speakers, this meant both difficulties relating to their minority position (such as migration status or discrimination) and to more personal, individual problems.

The five areas outlined above are not strictly separate, clearly demarcated natural wholes, but rather interrelated categories of analysis. Practical help received from the church - such as financial support or help in dealing with Finnish officials - could and often did support the social, cultural and psychological adaptation of the parishioners. Mental strength provided by their faith was, many interviewees believed, central not only to their psychological, but

also to their social and cultural adaptation. Religion's role as a buffer against difficulties was closely related to social, practical and psychological resources.

Nor are these five categories necessarily the only areas in which religion and faith interact. Rather than providing an exhaustive list of all the ways in which religion can relate to processes of acculturation, my aim in this chapter is to identify the intersections of religion and acculturation that are particularly relevant for Russian-speakers and in the Finnish context.

Finally, when discussing religion's role in acculturation, it is important to emphasise once again that religion is not synonymous with religious organisations. As discussed in the previous chapter, participation in official worship services is just one part of religion, and making use of resources provided by religious communities was not necessarily tied to membership status. Not all members were aware of practical assistance offered by their parish; at the same time, most of the services provided by the parish were available to anyone regardless of their religious membership or background (see also Timonen 2014), so the significance of such help may have extended far beyond official membership numbers. All of these issues will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

9.2 Practical support provided by religious communities

Religious communities and organisations often strive to assist minority members, and migrants in particular, in various ways (Hirschman 2004; Putnam 2000). An account of the relationship between religion and acculturation would thus be incomplete without mentioning the various acts of assistance provided by these communities. In this section, the focus will be on activities and assistance that can be broadly categorised as practical support. This support came in many forms and ranged from guidance in dealing with the municipal or governmental welfare services to advising new migrants in filling of official forms and from providing financial support or accommodation for those struggling to organising lifts to religious services and other events.

Drawing on fieldwork, table 9.1 provides an overview of the different resources and services provided and activities organised by religious organisations in the context of acculturation. There is notable variance in the extent to which the minority-geared services provided by religious organisations directly relate to acculturation, but my fieldwork suggests that practical help in its many forms was often an important facilitator of acculturation and could also support the social, cultural and psychological adaptation of minority members. Importantly, it is often available to anyone in need, regardless of denomination or (the lack of) official membership (see section 8.3.2).

During my fieldwork within the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, I found that the support provided by the parish could, in general, be divided into two categories. The first included the general welfare services as well as recreational

activities aimed at children, pensioners, and other parishioners regardless of their linguistic or cultural background. While some of these were more or less easily accessible to anyone - such as Tuesday lunches for those on low income or one-on-one appointments with parish employees - others, such as various peer support groups, required a certain level of fluency in Finnish.

The second type of services and activities was more specifically aimed at linguistic and cultural minorities in general or Russian-speakers in particular. For instance, the anonymous helpline operated by parish held weekly sessions in Russian.

As mentioned above, the practical assistance could also take the form of facilitating participation in religious activities. In fact, I would argue that the organisation of services in Russian (or in Church Slavonic) is one of the most important ways in which religious organisations can support the acculturation of Russian-speakers in Finland - particularly since, as will be discussed later in this chapter, religious participation relates to both sociocultural and psychological adaptation and as a number of interviewees mentioned linguistic barrier as a factor discouraging their religious participation. On a related note, another easily noticeable and significant example of practical acculturation work engaged in by different parishes was providing information on services and other parish activities in Russian. For example, in the Orthodox parish of Helsinki, information on upcoming events and parish life in general was available in Russian on the parish website, the pages of the parish newspaper *Ortodoksiviesti*, and several Russian-language social media groups administered by the parish. This type of support was important - and much appreciated by the parishioners - because it facilitated the religious participation of Russian-speakers regardless of their Finnish language skills. But it also had symbolic significance, increasing the visibility of the Russian-speaking minority within the parish and signalling their acceptance in the larger church community.

So far in this section, I have focused mainly on assistance provided by religious organisations. It has to be noted, however, that significant support was also provided by individual parishioners or believers outside of the church. Sometimes parishes helped coordinate this support, connecting volunteer parishioners with certain skills to those in need - for instance, a parishioner with a car to drive people to liturgies or a lawyer to help with a residence permit application. At other times, it was unorganised and spontaneous. For instance, an Orthodox priest I interviewed mentioned how, in 1990s, teachers of Orthodox religion - who often knew some Russian - had been an important source of support for the recently arrived Russian-speaking schoolchildren. Sometimes, they had been the only ones who could communicate with these children in school:

> [W]hen Russian children starting arriving to schools in the '90s, in the beginning there were no staff that knew Russian, so the [Orthodox teachers], they also acted as support staff and as interpreters and helped these kids that were completely new and spoke no Finnish.

In this example, the teachers went beyond their expected task, using their own time and resources to help the newly arrived children. Evgenia told me

that this type of 'going beyond' was one of the things she appreciated about her religious community, Jehovah's Witnesses. She noted the availability of such support regardless of the country one finds herself in - something that she felt was not necessarily the case for members of other religions.

> It's interesting that, whichever country you arrive in, [–] you know that you will always find friends there, that if you need it you will always be helped [–], you will always be viewed as 'one of us'. And if you compare this with other religions, well, maybe it doesn't apply to all people, but not everyone [–] will be ready to accept a stranger into their home if they're of the same religion but they meet each other for the first time, to say: you can stay at my place. I think this happens rarely.

Nikolai described such help within the JW community as 'normal' and tied it to the issue of trust among Jehovah's Witnesses:

> When we had our wedding here, some of my friends [from Russia] came over, they needed to stay somewhere [–] and one sister simply handed over the keys to her apartment and said, stay at my place for now. That's normal. She hadn't seen these people. She didn't know who was going to be staying at her place, what kind of people these were... [–] You trust. You trust that I wouldn't let just anyone in.

Practical support provided by both religious organisations and individual parishioners could be particularly significant in the early stages of the acculturation process. Oleg described the importance of the help he and his family received from the local Laestadian Lutheran[1] parishioners in the first two years following their move to Finland. Among other things, the parishioners had provided the family with material support and helped Oleg find a job at a time when finding employment had not been easy. While he no longer believed in God and identified as an atheist, Oleg looked back at the support he and his family had received with gratefulness and had officially joined the Lutheran church in order to pay the church tax and support its 'good work' in this way. 'I have probably already paid around 30 000 euros in church tax since arriving in Finland,' he joked.

In addition to the early stages of acculturation, the importance of practical support also became highlighted in times of difficulties. In these situations, representatives of religious organisations could act as mediators, provide financial assistance and support minority members in dealing with authorities, such as immigration or child protection officials. It has to be noted that such assistance was available to anyone, regardless of their cultural background, including members of the majority population. However, support from religious organisations

[1] Laestadianism is a Lutheran revival movement, with most Finnish members concentrated in the Northern Ostrobothnia and Oulu regions.

Support provided by religious organisations	
Type	Examples
1. Facilitation of religious participation	Events in Russian, Church Slavonic Lifts to religious services
2. Migration process	Emergency accommodation Connecting with volunteer lawyers
3. Dealing with authorities	Assistance with official forms Accompanying people to meetings
4. Financial support	Grocery bag donations Help with paying the bills
5. Help at times of difficulties	One-on-one meetings Peer support groups
6. Other types of practical support	Family therapy Subsidised rentals for students
7. Social and cultural acculturation	Hobby clubs Community meals
8. Services aimed at Russian-speakers	Russian language helpline Russian language children's clubs

Table 9.1: Types of support provided by religious organisations

and communities can be particularly important to minority members whose social networks are generally more limited than those of the majority population and who may also lack other resources that help deal with challenges in the Finnish context. This issue will be discussed in more detail in section 9.6, focusing on religion as a potential buffer against difficulties.

9.3 Religion and identity

One important question to consider when examining religion's role in the process of acculturation is its connection to identity. As discussed in chapter 3, religion can be a powerful source of identity formation and maintenance and is often connected to certain ethnic and national identifications. The idea that certain religions 'go together with' certain identities was expressed by several research participants, albeit usually on an implicit rather than explicit level. Consider, for instance, the following examples:

> My husband is an Ingrian Finn, so he's Lutheran.

> I told you that we're Ingrians, but actually we're Izhorian, and Izhorians are Orthodox.

While some people drew direct parallels between ethnicity and religion, as in the examples above, the fieldwork suggests that, overall, the relationship between religion and identity is somewhat more complex. On one hand, religion was often understood as a source or a constitutive part of ethnic or national identities or a resource for their maintenance. On the other hand, while the previous chapter showed the importance of practical considerations in such decisions, ethnic, national, regional, and even political identities could at times also affect the choice of which, if any, parish to attend. Elvira, for instance, said that she decided to not attend services at a certain Orthodox church due to its Russian atmosphere:

> I went there once, and it was... in principle, they were welcoming, but it was Easter, and they read a letter from the Patriarch from Moscow. It was all very Russian, and somehow Muscovite... [a sort of] Muscovite pride, and it was not close to my soul.

In Elvira's account, the church's 'excessive' Russianness is seen as a fault. Moreover, as a self-confessed 'proud Petersburgian', she connects its negative aspects to Muscoviteness, in particular. She did not explain what this 'Muscovite pride' meant in practice, but similar divisions between St. Petersburg and Moscow (and other regions and locations) were also made by other interviewees (see chapter 6), which highlights the potential significance of local and regional identities also in the context of religion.[2] Natalia, for instance, suggested that Russian Orthodoxy of small towns was very different to that of big cities, remarking that in the bigger cities it was harder to find good clergy. In villages and small towns, she said, 'you will find at least one priest who is loved by his parishioners, who say good things about him, [–] who say that he might sometimes give them 50 roubles for a drink'.

Overall, the qualitative findings on the relationship between identity and religious organisations discussed in this section centre around three themes that emerged from the data: the promotion of a sense of belonging to the Finnish society, the maintenance of 'heritage' identities, and the highlighting of the multicultural, cosmopolitan nature of religion.

As always, these themes do not represent clearly demarcated, logical wholes, nor were they (necessarily) representative of consciously constructed strategies of either the acculturating individuals or the religious communities within which I conducted the fieldwork (although it seems highly likely that certain choices by organisations were consciously made to signal or even promote a certain attitude, such as the acceptance of multiculturalism within the Orthodox church). Instead, they should be understood as often coexisting,[3] sometimes intersecting, and somewhat equivocal *tendencies*.

[2] For discussion on the interplay between local, regional and national identities in the Russian context, see White (2004).

[3] For example, a common prayer read at Orthodox services starts with a reference to the Finnish president and authorities and ends by asking God to remember the global Orthodox and Christian communities.

Before moving to a closer discussion of these tendencies, it is worth looking at what the statistical data reveals about the relationship between identity and religion. Based on previous studies (see chapters 2 and 4) and the qualitative findings, I had hypothesised that membership in Lutheran churches and participation in Lutheran services would correlate positively with Finnish and Ingrian Finnish identities, while membership in Orthodox church and participation in Orthodox services would show a similar connection with Russian and Finnish identities. I also predicted that membership in other faith-based organisation(s) would correlate with other identity choices.

Correlational analysis found a small statistically significant relationship between the strength of Finnish identity and membership in Lutheran church (β = 0.95, n = 93, p = .02) and the strength of Russian identity and membership in Orthodox church (β = 0.35, n = 169, p = .07). There was a possible relationship between the strength of 'other' identity choices and membership in 'other' religious organisations in the small population who selected this identity option in the survey (β = 5.07, n = 15, p = .11). No statistically significant relationships were found in the case of the other hypotheses.

I had also hypothesised that membership and participation in the Orthodox and Lutheran churches would correlate positively with supranational and multiple identities. There was a small statistically significant relationship between having attended Orthodox services and feeling part of the Russian-speaking world (r = .296, n = 100, p = .003). Unexpectedly, there was also a small statistically significant relationship between belonging to the Lutheran church and feeling Asian (r = .191, n = 124, p = .033). No statistically significant relationships were found between Orthodox and Lutheran membership and practice and other supranational identities.

These exploratory analyses did not control for confounding variables or multiple testing, so they should be verified in future research; particularly so as they were both complemented and challenged by the qualitative findings, which I will discuss next.

9.3.1 Churches as places for emphasising Finnishness

During the fieldwork I noticed that many religious organisations operating in Finland frequently engage in activities that highlight their Finnishness and/or centre the Finnish identity. This can take place either implicitly or explicitly through, for example, prayers for the Finnish state and authorities, sermons, or Independence Day celebrations. Perhaps counterintuitively, the tendency of foregrounding Finnishness seemed to be particularly strong among the Finnish Orthodox parishes.

While for some parishioners, attending Orthodox services could provide a way to stay in touch with their Russianness, the FOC representatives that I interviewed often highlighted differences between the FOC, ROC and other national churches, emphasising the Finnishness of the Finnish Orthodox church. Even those who accentuated the importance of multiculturalism and transnational collaboration often wanted to underline that the church is 'very much

Finnish':

> [T]he Orthodox Church is a 1000-year-old institution in Finland. So the church is not an immigrant. That is our great advantage. That this church has been here and continues a long story. So the immigrant can retain their own identity, a sense of nationality, but at the same time be involved in such a very Finnish, old Finnish identity.

This emphasis on the Finnishness of the Orthodox church may be explained by its history in Finland. While it currently enjoys a special position as one of the two 'unofficial state churches' of Finland (see chapter 4), it has previously, particularly in the years following Finland's independence in 1917, been seen as inherently foreign (Martikainen 2013, p. 171) or even as a 'ryssänkirkko', 'the church of the Russki'.

In this context, Finnishness was constructed in opposition to Russia and, in their bid to gain acceptance, some Finnish and Karelian Orthodox took steps to explicitly distance themselves from Russianness. During the interwar period, the Orthodox Church of Finland underwent a process of nationalisation which included de-Russification and, in many cases, Westernisation of its architecture, vocabulary, icons, church textiles and other religious objects and artefacts. In the growing anti-Russian atmosphere of the era, the goal was to dispel connections between Orthodoxy and Russianness. Many of the revisions were overseen by a special nationalisation committee, which aimed to replace what were seen as non-European and oriental influences with a 'Karelian-Finnish' style, deemed more suitable for the purposes of constructing a unified Finnish society and culture. At a time when Orthodoxy itself was perceived as tainted by Russianness and not always seen as compatible with 'true' Finnishness, the nationalisation committee was particularly concerned about the outward image of the Orthodox church. Research into the events of the era has shown that there was little room for recognition of the historical and cultural diversity of the Orthodox tradition in Finland - and even less for the voices of the Russian(-speaking) minority within the church - in this process (Husso 2017; Kahla 2015; Kemppi 2017).

In short, while the Orthodox Church itself often faced suspicions from the Lutheran majority due to its presumed ties with Russia, there were notable reservations towards and attempts to get rid of Russianness within the church itself. Ylä-Jussila (2020) has chronicled a similar pattern of both being suspected and feeling suspicious in the ecclesiastical work of the Finnish Lutheran and the Finnish Orthodox churches in Eastern Karelia during Finland's occupation of the area (1941-1944), describing the objectives and the lines of action of the Lutheran and the Orthodox clergy as the 'Greater Finnish Lutheranism' and 'Greater Karelian Orthodox Christianity', respectively. The Lutheran ministers, who often viewed the Orthodox church as 'too Russian' and suspected Orthodox priests of having pro-Russian sentiments, believed that, for the sake of the national unity, East Karelians had to be incorporated into the mainstream Lutheran tradition. By contrast, the Orthodox clergy stressed the unity

of Karelians as a single tribe under Greater Finland and the role of their traditional Orthodox faith in achieving this unity. Both viewed Russian identity as a threat to Finnishness and aimed to extricate East Karelians from any ties to Russia (Ylä-Jussila 2020).

While these historical events are not reflected in the policies and aspirations of the FOC today, Martikainen (2013, p. 160) has argued that the historical pursuit of extracting Russian elements from the FOC life, together with the so-called 'Karelian nostalgia', has excluded Russian (and Skolt Sami) Orthodoxies from the church. He has also suggested that, to become a church for Finland's Russian-speaking minority, the FOC would have to reconsider its traditional emphasis on Finnish, Karelian and Byzantine identities and embrace its Slavic past (Martikainen 2013, pp. 171-173).

With relation to this, during the fieldwork I observed several instances where either church employees or (Finnish-speaking) parishioners emphasised the differences between the FOC and the ROC. This was also brought up by a number of interviewees. While many were themselves critical of the ROC and agreed with most, if not all, of the criticism aimed at its higher levels, they nonetheless often held more positive views of its grassroots work. Here, again, regional differences seemed to come to play: many of those critical of Moscow nonetheless spoke lovingly of the local parishes they knew or had attended. Additionally, the strong emphasis on the differences between the patriarchates could feel uncomfortable to those who viewed 'all Orthodox churches as one'. Those attending Lutheran churches or other religious organisations did not mention such juxtapositions, and it may be that being outspoken in their criticism of Russia and the ROC is viewed as particularly important by Orthodox Finns due to the lingering connotations linking Orthodoxy and Russianness.

All in all, these observations suggest, firstly, that parishes often took steps that could be seen to support the construction and maintenance of a Finnish identity and, secondly, that despite - or perhaps rather due to - its lingering connotations with Russianness, the FOC does not necessarily strive to invoke connections with or offer particular support for the maintenance of Russian identities of its parishioners. Nevertheless, Orthodox faith and attending Orthodox services were an important part of cultural Russianness for many interviewees, including those with hybrid or multiple identities. The survey results also suggest that there is a connection between Russian identity and belonging to or participating in the events of the Orthodox church, although it should be noted that the survey did not explicitly differentiate between FOC and ROC parishes. The theme of churches as places for supporting heritage identities will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

9.3.2 Churches as places for supporting heritage identities

The interviewees presented conflicted views on whether attending religious services was (among other things) a way of supporting or maintaining one's ethnic heritage - and even on whether the two are related. In the case of Russian identity, those less religious seemed to emphasise Orthodoxy's role as integral

part of Russianness, albeit sometimes underlining that they themselves did not feel that it *should* be so. As Anton put it:

> I have to say that it probably is an integral part of Russia, both today and if you look back on history... whether I like it or not.

Religiously active interviewees, on the other hand, tended to emphasise the importance of faith and downplay or deny the role of ethnicity for their faith or practice: the idea that 'faith does not have nationalities or borders' (Jelena) was shared by many. In this discourse, religion comes first and is more important than ethnicity or nationality - an attitude also shown when discussing acculturation.

Those working within the Finnish Orthodox church also had different views on whether or not the preservation of ethnic or national identities was an important reason for Russian-speakers to attend Orthodox services.

> Practising religion is not a part of the Russian identity after the Soviet Union. Going to church is not a part of the Russian lifestyle. That's a big difference with the Romanians. In that country, the church was much stronger even during communism. But in Russia it was broken. Sure, there are people with a [religious] home background, but they are exceptions. That's my observation.

Another Finnish-speaking church employee that I interviewed had a slightly different view on the matter.

> [interviewer] Does it happen that some people come [to church] to preserve Russianness, the Russian culture?
>
> The [XX community] looks like that in my eyes, looking in from the outside. It happens. Yes, yes, it does. But then again, there is something there, somehow the balance is still such that the church, the church is what one commits to to a greater extent [than ethnicity/nationality]. But yes, it clearly does happen. After all, they have the Christmas party with Grandfather Frost and so on [laughs].

For this interviewee, the fairytale figure of Grandfather Frost or Ded Moroz is symbolic of what he views as the Sovietisation of Russian culture. He connected the post-Soviet New Year's celebrations - in which Grandfather Frost often features and which, he pointed out, were supposed to replace the Christian Christmas celebrations - to the oppression of Orthodoxy under the Communist regime, viewing these remnants of the Soviet past as somewhat incompatible with Christianity.

Interestingly, however, the religious Russian-speaking interviewees did not seem to find the Soviet traditions, such as the New Year, incompatible with their Christianity. While several people - both those who had experienced it personally and those who had learnt about it from their parents or grandparents - mentioned the persecution of religions in the Soviet Union, and many had an

overall negative view of the Soviet era, this did not necessarily translate to rejection of all Soviet traditions. It is interesting to consider to what extent the conservation of certain Soviet-era traditions[4] symbolises Sovietness for members of the Russian-speaking diasporas today. The interviews suggests that there is no such connection; most if not all families celebrated both Christmas and New Year, and the latter was not seen as something that replaces the former, but an additional cause for celebrations and, for some, a chance to 'receive presents twice' (Kira).

Overall, the data once again highlights individual differences between Russian-speakers, also when it comes to the relationship between religion and identity maintenance. As discussed above, for Elvira, who identified as both Finnish and Russian, the 'excessive' Russianness of a parish was a negative trait. For others, a 'Russian atmosphere' was what they were looking for, at least when they were 'missing home'. Anya, who had moved to Finland as a teenager with her parents, said that attending Orthodox services in general and those held in Church Slavonic in particular brought her closer to Russia and the Russian culture.

> The church was a saving place when I wanted... when there was this yearning for home. When I wanted to return to Russia, I would go to church instead.

Visiting Orthodox churches as a way of connecting with Russianess and/or combating the feelings of homesickness was a common theme in the qualitative data. Notably, however, this coping strategy was only mentioned by those who were religious. Perhaps unsurprisingly, visiting churches did not seem to be a way of connecting with their Russianness for those Russian-identified interviewees who viewed themselves as atheist, agnostic, or non-religious, even if they considered Orthodoxy an important symbol of Russian culture. In fact, as discussed above, it was not uncommon for these interviewees to highlight the Russianness of the Orthodox church, while those who identified as religious and/or believers would often emphasise that the church is not bound to certain nationalities or borders.[5] There seems to be a contradiction where, on one hand, church does provide a connection to Russianness, but on the other hand it is viewed in non-ethnic, universal and cosmopolitan terms.

This seemingly contradictory discourse highlights how religion often comes to play on different levels simultaneously and can relate to feelings of belonging on regional, ethnic, national and supranational levels at the same time. It

[4]Or traditions viewed as Soviet; for instance, while the celebration of the New Year was in fact politicised by early Soviet politicians as a way to push out Christian heritage, many of the incorporated traditions, such as Ded Moroz or Grandfather Frost, had pre-revolutionary roots (Petrone 2000).

[5]It is equally important to note that, contrary to the fears sometimes expressed in the media, the fieldwork provided no evidence that identifying as Orthodox or participating in Orthodox services - whether those organised by the FOC or the ROC parishes - would relate to 'politicisation of Russianness' or support for the Russian government among the Russian-speaking minority.

may also be linked to the finding that, regardless of the denomination, most parishes highlighted the transnational and cosmopolitan nature of religion. This tendency will be discussed in the next section.

9.3.3 Religion and cosmopolitanism

Emphasis on the transnational and cosmopolitan nature of religion was one of the central themes that emerged from the qualitative data.

It was often accentuated by believers themselves, and mentioned in the official and unofficial communication of the religious organisations. For example, the Finnish-language website of Jehovah's Witnesses highlights the multicultural, transnational nature of the global JW community, united around their faith and common objectives: 'We come from hundreds of ethnic groups and speak different languages. However, we have common goals' (Jehovan Todistajat, n.d.).

In the context of the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, two interrelated themes are significant with relation to this topic. Firstly, the church communication often highlighted the cultural diversity within the parish and presented it as both natural and positive (see figure 9.1). Secondly, it emphasised a cosmopolitan outlook, faith as a uniting factor that overcomes borders, and the global community of (Orthodox) Christians. While multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism are separate concepts, they were often intertwined in the work of the church, and will thus be discussed together in the following analysis.

KIRKKOHERRALTA

Moninaisuus rikkautta

TÄNÄ VUONNA VIETÄMME itsenäisen Suomen satavuotisjuhlaa. Historiallisesti ajanjakso on lyhyt, mutta itsenäiselle demokraattiselle valtiolle se on kuitenkin jo kunnioitettava ikä. Yhteen vuosisataan mahtuu suuria tapahtumia, jotka heijastuvat myös ortodoksisen kirkkomme vaiheisiin. 125 vuotta sitten perustettiin Suomen ortodoksinen hiippakunta, ja arkkipiispan istuin sijoitettiin Viipuriin. Alkoi syksyinen autonominen kirkkomme kehitys. Valtiollisen itsenäistymisen jälkeen kirkkomme sai ensimmäisen autonomiansa vuonna 1921 ja syksyisen asemansa Konstantinopolin patriarkaatin yhteydessä 1923. Sotavuodet 1939–1944 olivat tuhota ortodoksisen kirkon olemassaolon, mutta jälleenrakennuskausi valtion tukemana ja rahoittamana nosti kirkon tuhkan ja hävityksen keskeltä. Nykyisin kirkkomme on hyvin järjestäytynyt osa yhteiskuntaamme, ja sillä on arvostettu asema.

Yksi ehkä taka-alalle jäänyt ja unohtunutkin ominaispiirteemme on viime vuosikymmeninä vahvistunut kirkossamme: monikulttuurisuus ja -kielisyys. Kirkossamme on aina puhuttu eri kieliä ja toimittu erilaisten kulttuuristen perinteiden mukaisesti. Tälle moninaisuudelle on ollut omia sijansa ja arvonsa.

Olemme sadan vuoden aikana vastaanottaneet uutta väkeä: karjalainen evakkoviesti kulki omän Golgatan -tiensä, ja nykyinen maahanmuuttoliike tuo eri puolilta maailmaa uutta ortodoksista kansaa Suomeen. Tietyllä tavalla kirkkomme on muuttajien kirkko. Vain harva ortodoksi voi kertoa sukunsa asuneen samalla paikkakunnalla koko valtiollisen itsenäisyytemme ajan. Tämä moninaisuus on meille rikkaus, ei uhka, sillä historiassa tunteva kirkko osaa toimia oikealla tavalla. Sen työntekijät rakentavat seurakuntia, joissa kullakin kirkon jäsenellä on oma sijansa ja arvonsa. Kirkko ei muuta vieraaksi yhteisöksi uusien jäseniensä myötä. Menneisyys on meille peruskivenä, jolle rakennamme tämän ajan elämäämme kirkkona ja sen jäseninä kunnioituksen, arvostuksen, ymmärryksen ja erityisesti Kristuksen rakkauden hengessä.

Kirkkoherra Timo Tynkkynen
Lappeenrannan ortodoksinen seurakunta

ОТ НАСТОЯТЕЛЯ

Мультикультурность - это наше богатство

В ЭТОМ ГОДУ МЫ будем отмечать столетие независимости Финляндии. В исторической перспективе это не большой период, но для независимого демократического государства это почтительный возраст. За прошедшие сто лет произошло немало событий, многие из которых отразились в истории нашей православной церкви.Одно из значительных событий произошло 125 лет назад, когда для Финляндии была основана своя православная епархия. Кафедра архиепископа была размещена в Выборге. Начиная с этого события, началось развитие современной автономии нашей церкви. В 1921 году, после провозглашения государственной независимости, наша церковь получила автономию, а в 1923 году церковь приобрела свое положение в составе Константинопольского патриархата. Война 1939-1944 практически уничтожила православную церковь, но она вновь восстала из пепла и запустения при поддержке и финансировании со стороны государства. Сегодня наша церковь – это хорошо организованная часть общества, занимающая почетное положение в нем. Одна из особенностей нашей церкви, которая была потеряна и забыта в череде лет, но в последние десятилетия вновь стала укрепляющей для нее – это мультиэтничность и мультикультурность. Наша церковь всегда говорила на многих языках и действовала в соответствии с различными культурами. Всему этому многообразию было свое положение и своя ценность. На протяжении ста лет мы неоднократно принимали эмигрантов и беженцев: Своим Голгофским путем прошли эвакуированные карелы, современный поток переселенцев со всего мира приводит в Финляндию новых православных. Мы можем сказать, что наша церковь – это церковь переселенцев. Мало кто из православныхнаФинляндии в Финляндии может сказать, что его род жил в определенной местности на протяжении всех ста лет независимости.

Мультикультурность - это наше богатство. Она не является угрозой для церкви, которая знает историю и умеет двигаться в правильном направлении. Ее работники строят приходы, в которых для каждого прихожанина есть свое место и своя ценность. Церковь не может превратиться в чуждую организацию под влиянием новых ее членов. Прошлое для нас является краеугольным камнем, на котором мы созидаем нашу сегодняшнюю жизнь, будучи церковью и ее членами, в духе почитания, уважения, понимания и, главное, в духе любви Христовой.

настоятель Тимо Тюнккинен
Лаппеенрантский православный приход

4

Figure 9.1: A page from the digital edition of Ortodoksiviesti, the journal of the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki (issue 01/2017). The page features the same column on the benefits of multiculturalism in Finnish (above) and Russian (below).

In addition to explicit messages in sermons, parish newspapers, and other direct communication, churches also showed support for multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism in other ways. Sometimes, these were subtle. For instance, I had visited a small church in the Orthodox parish of Helsinki for years, but only noticed a small row of different flags placed at the entrance to the belfry, above the church hall, when I was consciously examining my surroundings during fieldwork (see figure 9.2). On other occasions, such as during the parish's Easter celebrations, they were impossible to miss. In fact, I suggest that Easter was a particularly important time for showing the parish's commitment to both multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. This theme will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Figure 9.2: A selection of flags on display at an Orthodox church in the metropolitan region of Helsinki

9.3.4 Cosmopolitanism as part of the Orthodox Easter celebrations

The idea of Christianity as a global and cosmopolitan community, transcending the borders of nation-states, cultures, and ethnicities, becomes particularly highlighted in the celebration of Easter. The most important occasion of the Orthodox church year, often called 'the feast of feasts', Easter is widely understood to be the basis of the Orthodox faith. It is also a time when many otherwise non-active churchgoers are more likely to participate in the parish life and to attend services.

One of the most evident signs of this multicultural or cosmopolitan attitude was the frequent use of minority languages, not just informally between the parishioners, but also as part of the religious services and the official communication between the church and the parishioners. A good example of this was a Holy Saturday afternoon service that I attended at the multicultural activity centre, Trapesa. Located in the suburb of Espoon keskus, some 20 kilometres from central Helsinki, Trapesa (run by a charity association Filoksenia and partly funded by the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki) offers various events and support for immigrants of different backgrounds and hosts Orthodox services 2-4 times a month. The Orthodox liturgies held at the centre frequently have an international attendance. On the Saturday in question, both the Lord's Prayer and the gospel were repeated in several languages, including Finnish, Russian,

English, Tigrinya, Amharic, Greek, and a Finno-Ugric language that I was not able to identify with certainty. At the end of the service, the priest addressed the parishioners to tell them about the Easter celebrations to be held in other locations as well as the upcoming events at Trapesa. He spoke first in Finnish and then repeated the short speech in Russian and English.

Later that day I attended the 'main' Easter Mass at the Tapiola Orthodox church. This service began around 11.30 PM and continued until the sunrise, after which the Lenten fast was broken with a communal celebratory meal. As with the earlier service at the cultural centre, here, too, several languages were used in addition to Finnish (which nevertheless in both cases remained the main language of the service). Unsurprisingly, given the difference in scale between the two services, on this occasion the linguistic variety was even greater than in the earlier service at the cultural centre. For the reading of the Easter gospel in the small hours, (native) speakers of different languages congregated at the front of the church and, in turn, read the same passage in their respective languages. The Paschal troparion (a celebratory hymn: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!), was repeated throughout the night in different languages, with the Church Slavonic and Swedish versions the most commonly heard ones after Finnish.

The greatest variety of languages, however, was used in the Paschal greetings. During the Easter period (which lasts for 40 days from Easter Sunday), Orthodox believers traditionally greet one another with *Christ is risen!,* answered with *Is risen indeed!* During the midnight service, priests would shout out these greetings, which were then answered loudly by the churchgoers. The greeting was repeated regularly throughout the night and in many different languages.

When first entering the church at the beginning of the Easter service, parishioners were given a long list of the Paschal greetings in over 50 different languages.[6] This happened at all three Easter night services (2016, 2017, 2018) that I observed in person as part of my fieldwork. In addition to shouting the greetings out one, two or three languages at a time throughout the night, at a certain point during the service the priests would go through the whole list. The parishioners could read the replies from the sheets. Notably, many of those present did not need a list to answer the greetings, as they had learned them by heart.

[6]In what can be read as an example of the foregrounding of the Finnish, Karelian and Byzantine identities mentioned by Martikainen (2013), the greeting in Church Slavonic is ninth on the list, below the Finnish, Swedish, Karelian, Skolt Sámi, Viena Karelian, Livvi-Karelian, Ludian, and Vepsian ones. Despite Russian being the second most common native language among the parishioners, the handout does not include the Russian version of the greeting, perhaps due to its similarity with Church Slavonic.

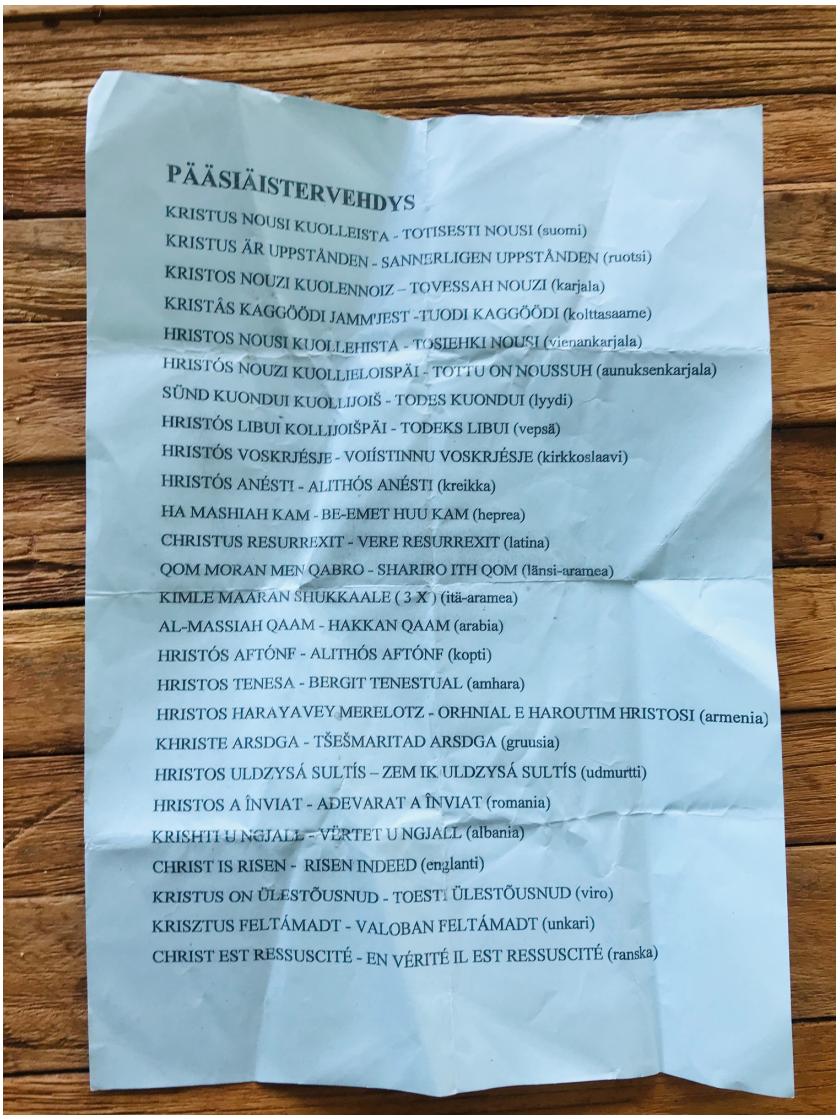

Figure 9.3: A photograph of the first page of a list of Paschal Greetings, handed out to churchgoers at the Easter service

Exchanging these multilingual Paschal greeting continued throughout the Easter period. When meeting Orthodox friends and acquaintances in the days following Easter, I would often be greeted with 'Hristos voskres!', 'Cristo è risorto!' or 'Kristus on surnuist üles tõusnud!', followed by a triple kiss. In the same period, it was not uncommon to see people update their social media statuses with either the full versions or, perhaps even more commonly, the abbreviations of Easter greetings. Probably the most common combination I

observed on social media during my fieldwork was *KNK! XB! XA!* - the Finnish, the Church Slavonic, and the Greek abbreviations of the greetings - answered by various commentators with *TN! BB! AA!*

The multicultural reality of the parish was also reflected in the celebratory meal served in the church hall after the Easter service. As it marks the end of the Lent, the table was always laden with delicacies, many of which had been forbidden during Lent. The dishes were mostly prepared by parishioners themselves and stored in the church kitchen during the service, until it was time to lay the table. In addition to the Finnish and Karelian Easter dishes - such as paskha, a traditional Easter dessert made from curd cheese and often decorated with the abbreviation of the Paschal greeting - the table always included dishes from other countries, from Greece to Ethiopia.

It is important to note that the multicultural prowess shown by the relatively diverse Southern Finnish parishes was not necessarily matched by those in other parts of the country. Natalia, based in a small town in Northeastern Finland, mentioned that, when attending the Easter Vigil in her regional centre, she had felt rather isolated; the atmosphere that she had come to know and love during Easter services in Russia was missing:

> It was so much about the ritual, we stood quietly, listened to the choir, the choir is separate, we are separate, no one sings, right, there was a procession, but not one person sang. And for us it was such a disappointment, you didn't have this feeling of unity at all. You have the feeling of the normal, never-ending Finnish isolation. You are here by yourself, everyone is in their own thoughts [–]. The majority were Finns. There were Russians of course, but the Russians were terribly worried to do something wrong, closed in the middle of Finns. And everyone was quiet. And the lack of singing, and the closed-ness of people, this should not be present in the middle of the Easter service. It ruins it.

Natalia's experience brings about the question of whether and in which ways religious organisations can support the social adaptation of minority members. I will discuss this question in the next section.

9.4 Religion and social adaptation

One of the central themes emerging from across the data and the previous chapters is the importance of social and interpersonal relationships in the process acculturation. The existing studies (see chapter 2) suggest that having good social support networks can make adaptation easier, and successful adaptation in other areas can, in turn, support social adaptation. The fieldwork revealed that feelings of loneliness and isolation were a commonly mentioned problem among the research participants, and even those who felt otherwise settled in Finland often said they would have liked to have more close friendships (see chapter 5). Against this background, it is clear that understanding the role

that religion plays in social adaptation is central for evaluating its overall role in minority acculturation.

With relation to this, two interconnected themes emerged from the interviews and the fieldwork notes. Firstly, it seems that desire for social interaction may be one of the reasons people participate in religious services. The second theme centred around the ability of religion, and especially religious participation, to create social connections and evoke a sense of community. The latter, in particular, was something that many interviewees mentioned finding through their faith or religious community:

> We have the Russian church, we have a nice community there. We have our own community there. (Galya)

> For me of course a big thing was getting into this community. I thank God all the time for that, for the community. (Jelena)

> Personally for me [the priest] has done a lot of good. [–] He has helped me with advice, introduced me into the collective. (Anya)

The exact meaning of community in these accounts varied. Sometimes the religion-based or religion-related communities described by the research participants were small - like a group of friends attending services together without necessarily having a lot of contact with other parishioners - while sometimes the feeling of a shared community extended to the whole parish or beyond it. This was the case for the research participant who sang at the choir of the Holy Trinity Church, located in the heart of Helsinki. The church has since the 1990 been the centre of the parish's Church Slavonic services and, as such, relates closely to the history of Finland's Old Russian minority (see chapter 4). Having moved to Finland in the 1990s, the chorister had no direct personal connection to this minority. However, following close participation in the parish life and immersion into its history, he saw himself as part of the long and continuing history of Russian-speaking Finland. It was this shared history, he believed, that brought the parishioners together and helped create what he described as a uniquely strong community:

> This church is the oldest Orthodox church in Helsinki, and of course we are very lucky. With the choir we have travelled to different countries, [but] we have not seen such a strong community anywhere. We have really got very lucky with this community. We are very different people, completely, but... we seem to be united by the common history of our church. People want to continue the Emigrant history, to keep these traditions alive. So it is not only about the choral singing itself, but also about keeping the traditions, preserving them. (name withheld)

In the passage above, the sense of community is centred not only around the parish, its choir and the common practice, but also around the (Old Russian) Emigrant history, which both the church and the choir symbolise. For the

interviewee, it encouraged identification with the larger Russian-speaking community. Moreover, he viewed the choral community as central to his adaptation to Finland and to 'finding [his] place' in the Finnish society.

This was also the case for Evgenia, who credited her congregation with providing her with a large community of friends and other social contacts. Having seen other Russian-speakers struggle with feelings of loneliness and boredom, she viewed the JW community as an explanation for why she had avoided similar feelings and, consequently, as 'a huge plus' in terms of her overall adaptation:

> Living here, watching people, Russian-speakers who live here, I've noticed that many complain that, well, there is a lack of social contact [общения не хватает] and somehow they are sad, they are bored, and they are drawn towards the motherland. So personally I am for example very glad that we have such a big congregation, we have many friends [there –], we are friendly and have companionship and I think that's amazing. But without the meetings, without our fellowship, it would be very hard. Therefore it is a huge plus, of course, precisely in terms of adaptation. [–] It's a huge plus that we have this companionship and this support.

9.4.1 Creating ties within and across communities

As suggested by Evgenia above and discussed in chapter 6, many Russian-speakers feel the lack of a strong, active Russian-speaking community in Finland. At the same time, speaking and preserving Russian language is of central importance to many. In this context, religion can play a significant role not only in building bridges between the majority and minorities, but also in fostering bonds between Russian-speakers.

The fieldwork indicated that, at least in some cases, participation in the parish life (through religious services and/or social events) can support the creation of both bridging and bonding connections (see chapter 2). However, the data also suggests that attending the mainstream, Finnish language services did not necessarily support the creation of ties with fellow Russian-speakers; similarly, attending services aimed at minorities did not necessarily encourage bridging towards other groups. For instance, despite cherishing the Russian-language community she had found in her congregation, Evgenia sometimes wondered if she should start attending the Finnish language services in her parish in order to find Finnish friends and bridge across the linguistic divide.

The differences seem to be at least partly related to the organisation of the parishes. Going back to Hoover's 2014 conceptualisation of the shared parish (section 2.4.2), Evgenia's congregation seemed to fit its description well; the Holy Trinity community less so as, while some of the resources are indeed shared with other members of the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, the community has its own church around which its work is centred. Yet creating bridging ties seemed to be easier for those attending the Holy Trinity church as it is also attended by some native Finnish-speakers as well as members of other linguistic minorities.

At the same time, whether or not people managed to form bridging and bonding ties within the church they attended did not depend solely on which language the services were organised in or who else attended them. Sergey, for instance, recalled that, despite frequently attending Finnish language services at an Orthodox church in his previous city of residence, he had not been able to form particularly close connections with the other parishioners there.

> I went there, you could say, by myself, so that I would come, pray... I did have some acquaintances, mainly adult Russian people, over the age of 50. Friends of my parents who attended church [laughs]. But somehow I didn't find close Finnish friends there.

This changed after he moved to the capital region and started attending a local parish there:

> The community of our church became like a second family to me. Only at that moment, I was already 28 years old, did I find my first Finnish friends.

Sergey's experience shows that, even when people did attend 'mainstream' religious services, they were not necessarily able to find social connections that they craved. This theme will be developed further in the next section.

9.4.2 Church as an arena of social adaptation

The focus on importance of social adaptation was not limited to acculturating individuals: religious organisations themselves also emphasised the domain of social adaptation. Some saw it as the most important way in which they could support acculturation. As described by an Orthodox priest:

> The Orthodox Church is small, it has finite resources, it doesn't have that much of a capacity for social work. But it has, of course, something that can be even more important; that is, communality [yhteisöllisyys].

As with practical support, the services offered by the parish in relation to social adaptation could be broadly divided into those open to all - such as coffee hours, hobby clubs, day trips, and retreats - and those aimed specifically at Russian-speakers and other linguistic or cultural minorities. In the Orthodox parish of Helsinki, the latter included, at different points in time, a multicultural craft club, a music club for Russian-speaking children, a Finnish-Russian youth choir, a Russian-language family club, and a Russian discussion club.

While the parish thus offered, in general (before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic), a wide selection of clubs and activities aimed at supporting social or sociocultural adaptation, one theme that emerged in my discussions with many Russian-speakers (and, sometimes, other parishioners) was the lack of awareness of these services: not everyone knew of the social events organised by their

parish. (Notably, this was also often the case with practical support, discussed in the previous section). Moreover, lack of prior social networks could also limit participation in social activities, as some people did not feel comfortable attending them alone. Thus, it seems that the threshold for someone struggling with loneliness to seek help from parish was sometimes rather high, something also acknowledged by the church employees.

Given the centrality of social adaptation in the accounts of both parishioners and church employees, it is also notable that several research participants disclosed feeling that a sense of community was lacking in their parish. Tamara, while speaking appreciatively about her church in general, said it could do more to foster social connections among the parishioners.

> I think there could be lessons where people could get together, discuss things [–]. Our church, it's more European, I would say [laughs]. And Finns, and all people... I don't feel completely at ease there. For services, it's good and normal. But when the trapesa[7] begins, I don't feel at ease. Perhaps it's because I haven't found my own people [–]. Everyone separates into their own circles, and the kids and I stay in ours. Somehow, I don't know why, I haven't found a place there where I would feel good or comfortable.

Tamara's experience of people separating into 'their own circles' is similar to Raj's (1997, p. 109) observations of a Hindu Punjabi temple in London, where the formation of small social groups or cliques within the temple challenged its position as a unified community. Interestingly, Tamara connects her difficulty of finding fulfilling social connections within the church with its 'Europeaness'. As discussed in chapter 8, she would have preferred attending services at a ROC parish were it not for her children, and this comment may reflect that preference. However, similar remarks were also made by other parishioners, and this discourse was often tied to the theme of social relationships in general being 'different' in Finland (see chapter 5). Attending religious services was not a magic wand that would automatically help with feelings of loneliness and isolation, and Finnish-speaking parishioners were not necessarily different from other members of the majority population when it came to sociocultural markers such as sociability or in their readiness to make friends with newcomers.

Jackson and Passarelli (2008) highlight how important it is for minority members to be welcomed into a religious community and invited to social activities, also those taking place outside of the official schedule of services. They cite several study participants for whom the lack of this 'social invitation' had prevented active participation in parish life or even prompted them to change parishes. This was also the case for Anya, a young woman I interviewed. After arriving in Finland, Anya sought out an Orthodox church and started frequenting it regularly. However, while she described her fellow parishioners in that church as 'very good in themselves', she had soon realised that she 'needed to go somewhere further':

[7] A common meal served after the service.

> At some moment I realised that there is little progress, it's a more closed world. Let's say, in Russia, I reminisced about what it was like there, people are more open, they are in contact with parishioners also outside of the church... whereas here I felt that the collective was a bit closed, and I wanted to do something else.

The feeling of a lack of community outside of the church had prompted Anya to change the church that she attended, while still staying in the same parish. She felt more at home and connected in the new church, crediting the priest with presenting her to a multicultural collective of young people with whom she enjoyed spending time.

While Anya, based in the metropolitan region of Helsinki, enjoyed a choice of several Orthodox churches within a relatively short distance of her home, the situation was very different for Natalia, whose hometown only had Orthodox services on certain days, usually a few times a year. If she wished to attend services at other times, she had to travel to the nearest large town. Even there, she said, she did not get a feeling of community or unity. This had left Natalia feeling disappointed and, despite identifying both as a believer and as a religious person, less keen to attend the services.

Anya's and Natalia's accounts underline that the role of religious organisations in the process of acculturation and their capability for supporting minority parishioners is affected by several factors beyond the official stance and/or strategies of the church, including locality, activity of the other parishioners, and language skills of those employed by the parish.

In terms of religious organisations' role in supporting social adaptation and acculturation more broadly, it is also important to look at what representatives of these organisations understand as successful acculturation. While, as discussed above, the official communication of the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki highlights integrative and cosmopolitan approaches, some church employees talked about acculturation in more assimilationist (Hall and Back 2009 p. 685) terms, as exemplified by the following passage from a fieldwork interview with a parish employee:

> The issue of adaptation is quite interesting... because I know families that have, say, two daughters. One of whom is fully adapted. The circle of friends and everything is Finnish-speaking or for example Swedish-speaking, and then the other sister, her social circle is all Russian-speaking. And this other sister, even her Finnish is weaker than that of her sister's. And it might even be that it is specifically the older sibling, who was perhaps even born in Russia, who is the adapted and the integrated one.

In the above passage, the degree of a person's adaptation is assessed through her own language skills and the language of her social circle. Being adapted and integrated is equated with having a Finnish- or Swedish-speaking friends. By contrast, having a Russian language friend group and 'weaker' knowledge of Finnish is viewed as incompatible with adaptation and integration. Notably,

the two terms are here used interchangeably, with the former employed in a way that seems to suggest assimilation rather than integration of two or more cultures and languages. It is also interesting to note that the use of Swedish - the native language of some five percent of Finland's residents - is accepted as a sign of successful adaptation, whereas the use of Russian - the native language of 1.5 percent of the population - is not.

Against this background, it is interesting that during my fieldwork within the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki I noticed no events or clubs aimed directly at improving the Finnish language skills of Russian-speakers or other minority parishioners. As pointed out in section 5.5.1, language's role in the acculturation of Russian-speakers is not unequivocal. Nevertheless, many interviewees perceived learning Finnish language as an important step to adaptation, and to social adaptation in particular, and some felt that attending religious services and other events organised by the parish could help them in this. Elvira, for example, said that church was the only place where she got to speak Finnish and where she had Finnish-speaking friends.

For others, however, the language barrier could discourage attendance at both religious and social events organised by the parish. Notably, it could complicate participation even for those who did speak Finnish but felt they were not 'fluent enough' or simply felt that talking about religious issues was easier for them in their native language. Maxim, who lived in a small town in Eastern Finland where the local priest did not know Russian, gave the sacrament of confession or penance as an example of such a situation.

> Thank God, we attended church before, we know what this or that means. But in reality [the language] does interfere. It's bothersome that you can't get up and make a proper confession normally. [–] It would be easier with Russian language.

As Maxim had participated in church services regularly prior to his move to Finland, he was familiar with the tenets of the faith, structure of the services, and Orthodox traditions - all of which, he pointed out, made it easier to adapt to the parish life notwithstanding the challenges posed by the language. For others, such as Tamara who had only joined the Orthodox church as a grown-up in Finland, language played a(n even) more significant role.

> I've noticed that in Finnish, when we speak about the spiritual part, I don't understand everything, of course. It's more understandable in Russian, but even in Russian not all of the words are clear to me [laughs].

In short, the fieldwork showed that language could in some cases prove an impediment to both social adaptation and to general participation in the parish life for members of linguistic minorities. This underlines the need to control for self-assessed language skills when creating structural models assessing the relationship between religion and social adaptation, as I will do next.

9.4.3 Proposed structural model for the relationship between religion and social adaptation

Based on the fieldwork, the interviews, and previous studies, I had hypothesised that religious participation has a positive effect on social adaptation. As occasional participation is unlikely to have the same effects as frequent one, participation was measured by whether or not the respondent participated in services or had other direct contact with their parish at least weekly. Social adaptation was measured by number of close friends across three categories (close Russian-speaking friends, close Finnish friends, other close friends). The respondents were divided into ten groups based on their total number of close friends, where *0* signified that a respondent had no close friends and *9* included respondents who had several close friends of all three categories. The structural model (presented in figure 9.4) also included a set of other control variables, such as life satisfaction, language skills, and belief in God.[8]

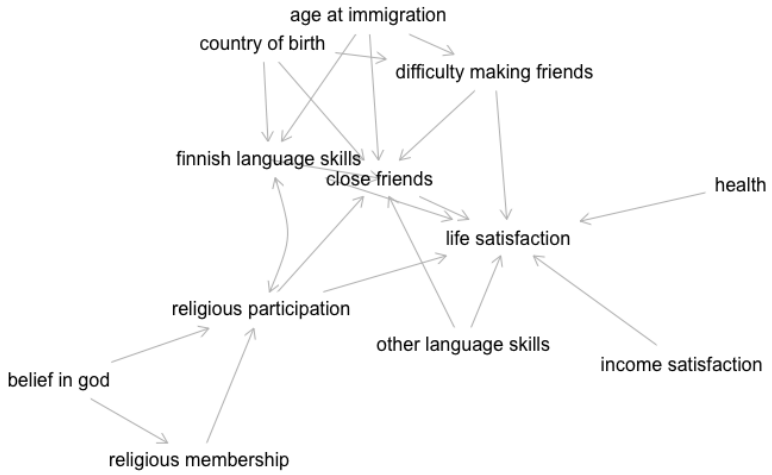

Figure 9.4: Structural model for the relationship between social adaptation and religious participation

Parting from the structural model that I had created, I used the Dagitty software library (Textor et al. 2016; Pearl 2009) to discover sufficient adjustment sets in order to estimate the effect of religious participation on social adaptation.[9] The adjustment set consisted of age at immigration, country of birth and

[8] I chose the control variables to include in the model on the basis of the qualitative findings and existing studies. For instance, as both previous research and my own interviews had suggested a relationship between life satisfaction and health, I chose to include self-assessed health as a control variable in the model. Similarly, as the qualitative findings discussed in the previous sections had indicated that there was a relationship between language skills and willingness to attend religious services, I included Finnish language skills in the model.

[9] The rules for discovering adjustment sets in graphical models are based on the do-calculus

	Coef. (Std. Err.)
(Intercept)	2.80*
	(1.23)
ReligiousParticipWeekly	2.38**
	(0.76)
AgeOfImmigration	0.01
	(0.01)
CountryofBirthOther	−0.83
	(1.04)
CountryofBirthRussia	−0.49
	(0.80)
CountryofBirthSovietUnion	0.15
	(0.89)
CountryofBirthUkraine	0.23
	(1.04)
LanguageFinnish	0.10
	(0.05)
R^2	0.10
Adj. R^2	0.07
Num. obs.	188

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table 9.2: Coefficients and model statistics for the multiple regression model predicting social adaptation.

Finnish language skills as the variables that should be controlled for. This is the minimal adjustment set needed according to the structural model hypothesised to underlie the data, using directed acyclic graphs (Pearl 2009).

The analysis was conducted using multiple regression with religious participation as the explanatory variable, the variables in the adjustment set as covariates, and the social adaptation measure as the dependent variable. The details of the model are presented in table 9.2. Assuming that the specified structural model is correct, the model indicates that attending services or having other direct contact with one's parish every week seems to increase the overall number of close friends a respondent has. This finding provides further evidence for the proposition that religious participation supports social adaptation.

9.5 Faith and psychological adaptation

Previous sections have shown that religion in its many forms can be an important source of social support, cultural maintenance, and practical assistance, provid-

developed by Pearl (2000); see also Pearl (1995) and Shrier and Platt (2008).

ing acculturating individuals with resources that support their acculturation. In this section, the focus will be on religion's role in psychological adaptation, including well-being and life satisfaction. This topic is particularly important because, as discussed in chapter 2, acculturative stress may increase the risk factors for mental health, while religiosity and religious participation have been linked with higher life satisfaction also among minorities (Hoverd and Sibley 2013, p. 184; Neto 1995).

The link between active religious participation and psychological adaptation also emerged from my data. In fact, research participants reported psychological and mental benefits with relation to all of the 'religious actions' described in chapter 8 (believing, belonging, practising and participating). However, the religious domain most commonly cited with relation to psychological adaptation was that of belief. Many described their faith as a mental resource, a power reserve that they could draw on when needed. Anya, for instance, said that belief in God had played an integral role in her acculturation, giving her the determination to fight for her goals in the new country: 'I tried simply not to give up, to fulfil my goals, and I think that comes from faith'.

For Elvira, faith provided a moral anchor that helped her understand 'what is going on' - an understanding that, she felt, was necessary for survival in the difficult sociopolitical situation that she found herself in (see chapter 5):

> I think that for me, the faith in God is very important. A lot of what is going on now is the relativisation of everything. And I feel that when people start doing evil, there's this mist, incomprehensibility, and church and faith distinguish between what is good and what is evil. What you can do to other people, and what you can't. A moral explanation for what is going on. I think it's very important for understanding what is going on around you. And when you understand, you can survive. And when you don't, it's very difficult, and I think that's when you can really fall into depression.

Yuri also saw religion as essential to his psychological adaptation. Firstly, he said, attending worship services helped him calm down, clear his mind, and assess his priorities. Secondly, faith and relationship with God provided him with a foundation on which both his self-understanding and many of his life choices were built:

> When you attend services, after the service you have a completely different outlook on the world. [– F]irstly, everything in life becomes easier, clearer, more understandable. And then life somehow calms down and takes on, I don't know, a simple form. You understand that, well, all of these worries, perhaps failures, in reality all of that means nothing. [–] I think that this is why a person has all of these problems, in the long run, because he lacks patience, lacks strength and faith in himself. Well, of course, friends can help you believe in yourself, your family and loved ones can do this, but I'm sure that

> to have some kind of, I don't know, a serious foundation, it's not possible without the help of the Almighty.

Finding meaning through faith was one of the most common themes mentioned by the interviewees when discussing how religion can benefit acculturation. Jelena, for instance, felt that God had brought her 'to peace' and helped her find her calling. She connected this peace with moving to Finland, something she felt was also influenced by God:

> I don't consider myself an exception, but I got lucky. I think that the main thing is that I got very lucky here. God brought me here, I met good people, there was a lot of help.

Galya, too, felt that God was 'leading' her. With relation to this, she highlighted the importance of religious practice, namely prayer:

> I sometimes feel that when you stop praying, somehow when you become lazy, something bad happens. So it's necessary to pray.

Galya saw prayer not only as means of asking for guidance or requesting help with personal problems, but also as a way of connecting to other believers (see section 8.3.3) and, sometimes, of dealing with shared trauma. For example, she mentioned that prayers had been read at her church for the children of Kemerovo, a Siberian city where earlier that year a disastrous fire in a shopping mall had killed 60 people, many of them children. In this instance, religion made it possible to collectively address a tragedy that had shocked many yet received little attention in the Finnish media.

In many of the accounts above, psychological adaptation is intertwined with other forms of acculturation. In fact, it seems that religion's effect on psychological adaptation is at least partly related to its ability to facilitate other forms of adaptation - for instance, through having a positive effect on social adaptation. This is exemplified in the following account from Kira, in which she discusses the difficulty her mother experienced following the family's move to Finland and the role that religion played in helping them. According to Kira, the parish the family had attended had helped her mother to 'live again', and social interaction had played an important role in this:

> She had a difficult time with moving here, and the adaptation. And [the church] helped her a lot. It cheered her up, and she could, like, live again.
>
> [interviewer:] How did it help her?
>
> I think even simply that she found friends there, that she was able to talk to someone.

In addition to faith as a power reserve, a moral anchor, and a source of meaning, religion could also be seen supporting acculturation through (arguably) promoting certain attitudes, such as the importance of avoiding 'excessive pride'

and of moderating one's expectations. Maxim brought this up, believing that being Orthodox had helped him face challenges, including those related to adaptation.

> The more you expect, the more disappointed you will be even with little challenges. But if you expect the worst... I think that in Russian Orthodox church, the behavioural code of a Russian Orthodox person is to think of yourself as being worse than other people.
>
> [interviewer:] Did this attitude help you when you moved to Finland?
>
> Yes, it helped a lot. I've noticed that nothing comes easy in my life. So I have the attitude that things can go wrong, and I orient myself accordingly. If something does not work out, it will never bring me to depression, because I understand that well, nothing ever comes easy to me, so it means that I need to try again, and then again, and sooner or later it will happen.

In addition to the religion-based 'behavioural code' which allowed him to persevere in the face of difficulties, Maksim, too, pointed out that faith itself had been of great help to him, giving life a sense of meaning in the midst of changes and challenges.

> The faith itself gives a meaningful reference point. [–] I see my life - despite always expecting things to go worse than they do for others - I view all of my life, including the move, particularly the move to Finland, as a sequence of big successes. I feel that my life is filled with meaning.

9.5.1 Proposed structural models for the relationship between religion and psychological adaptation

The qualitative findings, discussed above, suggest that faith and other forms of religion can have a notable effect on psychological adaptation. Expecting the same relationship to emerge from the quantitative data, I hypothesised that faith, religious practice and religious participation would all increase psychological adaptation, operationalised as life satisfaction.

To test this, I created three structural models, one for faith (operationalised as faith in God), one for practice (operationalised with the help of a composite measure including prayer and the reading of the Bible) and one for participation (operationalised as having contact with one's religious community). Dagitty (Textor et al. 2016) was once again used for determining the minimal adjustment sets needed for each of the models. In all three cases, this set included religious socialisation. Contrary to my expectations, the results of the multiple regression analyses did not show a statistically significant relationship between any of the three explanatory variables and outcomes. Presuming such a relationship indeed exists, possible reasons for its absence in the statistical analysis include model

misspecification and sample size (see chapter 3). This could be tested by running the same analysis using larger sample sizes or revising the structural models in the light of new research findings.

While statistically significant relationships were not found in the multiple regression analysis, the qualitative data suggests that religion, and faith in particular, can support psychological acculturation in various ways, including providing support at times of hardship. Religion's potential for 'buffering' difficulties will be discussed in the next section.

9.6 Religion and faith as buffers against difficulties

Acculturation can be a highly stressful process, even more so when, as discussed above, the acculturating individuals have to deal with negative stereotypes and discrimination in their country of residence. The 'religious buffering hypothesis', presented in chapter 2, suggests that religion can act as a protective mechanism and thus promote well-being among people who find themselves in stressful situations (Hoverd and Sibley 2013; Storm 2017).

Religion's protective capacity was well illustrated in Anya's account of her first years in Finland. Having been required to move to Finland as a teenager due to her father's work, she had faced a lot of challenges with relation to linguistic, social, and psychological adaptation. In these testing circumstances, religion and faith had been a source of much-needed support.

> It was difficult to get to used to this... different tempo of life. It was really hard to learn the Finnish language, for my family as well. And at first it was hard to find any friends here... In the beginning it was difficult. [—] And to touch on your topic, I can say that to get through these difficulties, you had to go through them with faith. [—] And people I know have also said that they go to church when it's difficult.

While the stress-buffering capacity of religion has been established in various studies (see section 2.4.2), there is uncertainty on whether it is mostly a social process, drawing from religious community life and social support networks created through religious participation, or if cognitive components of religion, such as beliefs and religious self-identification, also play a part in the process (Storm 2017). Based on Anya's account, as well as the experiences shared by other interviewees, I would suggest that the outcome is based on a combination of different factors. This will be illustrated by examples discussed in this section.

I have provided a short overview of the different challenges faced by the members of Finland's Russian-speaking community in their process of acculturation in chapter 5. In this section, my focus will be on three of these: discrimination, personal problems, and difficulties relating to the process of migration. I will begin with the last category.

9.6.1 The process of migration

Religion's role as a potential provider of not only psychological and social, but also practical support was highlighted in the accounts of those religious participants who had experienced challenges in or relating to the process of migration. I gained a poignant reminder of the very real ways in which migration bureaucracy can and does affect the lives of many migrants through hearing Nikolai and Evgenia's story.

Nikolai, who was born in (what was then the Soviet Socialist Republic of) Ukraine and grew up in Russia, had by the time of our interview in 2019 lived in Finland for over a decade. A couple of years after the move he had met his future wife, Zhenya, through mutual friends back in Russia. Nikolai and Zhenya had married and Zhenya had moved to Finland. The couple had two small children, who, like Nikolai, had permanent residency in Finland. Yet Zhenya's applications for her residence permit had been denied and, at the time of our interview, she was under risk of deportation from Finland.

While I am not aware of the legal details of Nikolai and Zhenya's situation, their story once again underlines the diversity of the Russian-speaking community and the inequalities within it. It also highlights religion's role as a psychological and practical buffer: in this difficult and highly stressful situation, both Nikolai and Zhenya said that their faith had offered them comfort, and their religious community had also been of great support.

9.6.2 A buffer against discrimination

As established in chapter 7, discrimination and othering are some of the main difficulties in the process of acculturation, particularly in the case of young Russian-speakers. Against this background, it is important to consider whether and how religion may be able to support those affected by these problems.

It has been established that religion can act as a buffer against discrimination (Diehl and Koenig 2013, p. 11). My fieldwork suggests that this effect may be twofold. Firstly, religion and faith can help people cope with experiences of discrimination. Secondly, and just as importantly, religious communities may offer a refuge from discrimination, a 'safe environment for people of different languages and backgrounds [where] they can hopefully feel welcome and equal' (interview with an Orthodox priest).

In fact, many research participants expressed an opinion that religiously active Finns are less prejudiced against Russian(-speaker)s than other members of the majority population. Mikael, for example, said that 'you don't face prejudice from Orthodox Finns anywhere near on the same scale as you do from other Finns'. Elvira mentioned that Orthodox parishioners 'do not go all [makes a face] when you say that you're Russian'. Nikolai said that there 'cannot be' racism within the JW congregation, as it would go against their faith:

> We receive education on this. Of course, maybe somewhere in the depth of his heart someone might have earlier been a, how to put it, a racist, yes, a racist who doesn't like another nation at all. But if

> he is a Witness, it means that he has got rid of this feeling. Perhaps it may emerge sometimes, but he has the duty to extinguish it in himself.

Studies show conflicting results on whether religiosity is indeed related to greater levels of tolerance. Auguste (2019) found religious individuals to have an overall higher propensity for accepting migrants and racial and linguistic minorities compared with their non-religious counterparts. On the other hand, exclusive religious belief (belief in the authenticity of one's own religion and the inauthenticity of other religions) was related to less trust and acceptance of minority groups (Auguste 2019). At the same time, it is clear that the relationship between religiosity and tolerance is complicated by the fact that it is affected by a wealth of other factors, including age, level of education, and locality (see Golebiowska 2014).

It is evident from the interviews and from the fieldwork data that many Russian-speakers feel like religious organisations, and the Orthodox churches in particular, offer them a safe haven in a country where being a Russian-speaker or a member of another minority group is not always easy. Nevertheless, for the sake of balance it has to be pointed out that religious organisations are not automatically free from racism or prejudice. While I never witnessed any instances of discrimination or racist language being used in the church during the course of my fieldwork, I did notice that racist discourse and even slurs such as 'ryssä' were sometimes used in online discussions also among members of different religious congregations. While examination of online discussions was not officially part of my fieldwork, I would argue that in a modern society, and in the post-2019 world in particular, online events can hardly be separated from the rest of the parish life. As such, for a Russian(-speaker) witnessing a fellow parishioner using a racist slur on social media may not be all that different from overhearing it in an offline situation. Incidentally, an Orthodox priest I interviewed said that, despite his parish's openly anti-racist stance, there was still some prejudice against Russian-speakers within it, and one can only assume that this is also the case in some other parishes. In short, the relationship between religion and discrimination seems to be complex and multifaceted and deserves more attention.

9.6.3 Personal challenges

In general, the significance of both psychological and practical support provided by faith and religion was particularly notable when interviewees spoke about personal challenges they had encountered. The types of challenges disclosed by the interviewees ranged from relatively common ones, such as divorce, inter-generational conflicts and health problems, to those encountered less frequently. While some had been resolved and were viewed by the interviewees as nothing more than part of their life experience, other interviewees found themselves in the middle of difficult situations at the time of the interview. As some of the issues discussed in this sub-chapter are particularly sensitive and potentially

stigmatising, I have taken the extra precaution of not naming the interviewees in the following paragraphs.

In this section, I will focus on two interviewees who had faced major personal problems. At the same time, it has to be underlined that in both cases, these personal problems could not be fully untangled from their position as minority members and from acculturative stress.

The first interviewee spoke openly about a drug addiction he had battled in his youth. As he explained:

> When you live in your home country, you look for social circles where the guys are from approximately similar families, with the same kind of interests. But here we were united by being... perhaps you can't quite say that we were outcasts, it wasn't that we were completely pushed out, but it was much harder to become friends with Finnish guys. And in this kind of group, where people come together from different countries, different social classes, and if someone has previous experience of taking drugs, for instance, it quickly spreads through the community [–]. It's that kind of age as well, 14, 15, 16, you go together with everyone like a herd.

The second interviewee spoke about how she had lost the custody of her children, who had been placed in a foster family in out-of-home care. While the reason for the loss of custody, severe depression following a difficult breakup with the father of the children, did not directly relate to her position as a migrant and a minority member, she could not help but wonder whether she would have developed the depression had she lived closer to her support network - or would the relationship have fallen apart in the first place if she had married someone from 'her own culture', with whom it would have been easier to communicate.

In both cases, the interviewees highlighted the role of religion and faith in helping them overcome these difficulties. For the person who had battled drug addiction, it was faith and prayer, along with the moral values he had found in church, that, he felt, had been central in helping him overcome his addiction and break away from 'the bad circles':

> In my case, because the topic of your study is tied with religion, with faith, for me this played an important role in me moving away from this company. By the end of high school I had such bad relationships at home that my parents told me to move out, and I started living, when where, with one friend, with another [–] I felt that I was in a difficult position, having left home, being alone, I started asking God for help, praying. I had always been a believer, since childhood, read prayers. I wasn't a churchised child, my family was not religious. But I prayed every evening. And apparently some base had been laid, so that when I found myself in a difficult situation, I turned to God with all of my heart.

The interviewee whose children had been taken into care also highlighted the role of personal faith as a buffering resource. However, in her case practical

help and support provided by the church had also proved valuable. One of the most important forms of such support had related to the communication with the foster carers and the social workers assigned to her case, something that she had initially found challenging. As an immigrant, she felt, learning the right ways of interacting with the officials was particularly important, as it could affect how they treated her and even the outcome of her children's case.

When examining this narrative, it is important to consider the specific context in which it is rooted. In Autumn 2012, a few years before the interviewee's children were taken into care, a highly mediated and politicised battle between the Finnish child protection services and a multicultural immigrant family had attracted significant public attention after the family's four children, including a newborn, were extracted from their home and placed in the care of the child protection authorities. In this case, too, the mother of the family was a Russian-speaker from Russia, while the father was an immigrant from a Muslim-majority country, although unlike in the interviewee's case, the parents at the centre of the media attention were not divorced. According to Finnish authorities, there were legal grounds for the decision to extract the children from the family due to suspicions that their welfare was at stake. The parents denied these accusations, suggesting that the decision may have reflected the prejudice of the Finnish officials. While, from the beginning, the news reports had emphasised the immigrant background of the family and the mother's Russianness in particular, a lot of the subsequent coverage focused on challenging the idea that prejudice could affect the work of the Finnish officials, with much attention also dedicated to (what were presented as) cultural differences between Russian and Finnish understanding and practice of so-called disciplinary violence.

While the interviewee did not directly refer to this or other highly publicised cases of disagreements between immigrant families and Finnish child protection authorities, she underlined that it was essential for someone in her situation to learn to communicate 'the right way' and to learn 'how the Finnish system worked'. She partly credited the church with helping her in this process. A priest had even accompanied her to meetings with the social services, helping to smooth out difficulties and providing important psychological support in what was a highly challenging, even traumatic situation. By the end of the process, she had started viewing the officials in a different light:

> I would say that they don't want to hurt us, they want to help us. In the beginning, when they started taking the children away, [all I could think was] give me my children back, but it's not that easy, you have to work for it. And while I was fighting with them all the time, nothing good came out of it. When we started having a normal relationship, they started understanding me, I started understanding them, some sort of a common goal, we started having different attitude towards one another, and the process could start.

The above case studies illustrate the different ways through which religion could 'buffer' difficulties and support minority members in challenging, psychologically and socially stressful situations. Sometimes, this support stemmed

from personal faith and practice; at others, it was organised or coordinated by religious communities. To return to the question posed in the beginning of this section, it seems clear that religion's stress-buffering capacity is a sum of many different parts.

9.7 Beyond instrumentalism: Faith as a value in and of itself

In the previous sections, I have presented and discussed five ways in which religion in its many forms affects the acculturation of Finland's Russian-speakers. While these categorisations are based on qualitative and quantitative data, it should be noted that research participants themselves often rejected such an instrumentalist approach to faith and religion.

For the most part, the religious interviewees did not assess the role and importance of religion and faith in their lives from an instrumental viewpoint - for instance, through how religion could help them in the process of acculturation - but viewed it as a separate, highly significant sphere of life. As discussed in chapter 5, while the interviewees did not necessarily attend services every week or fill their days and calendars with religious practice, gatherings and rites, they often underlined that faith and, to a lesser extent, religion, held a special place in their lives.

My suggestions that religion could help migrants in the process of adaptation was often met with the counterargument that religion was more important than just a means to an end. When I asked Yakov if his faith and being active in church had helped him find his place in Finland, he answered in the following way:

> [Religion] is a part of life. It's not about looking for your place. The church is everywhere, in Ireland, in Japan... or even if it isn't, it will be in the soul, inside.

Like Yakov, religious interviewees largely rejected the instrumental approach to religion and instead emphasised practice and, in particular, faith as something that goes above and beyond the earthly struggles, the minutiae of everyday life. This discourse may also relate to the ideas of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and the 'accepted' forms of religion, discussed in the previous chapter. In any case, it did not mean that they were reluctant to draw on religion and faith in times of need, just that they wanted to highlight that their significance went beyond that. Philip et al. (2019) found a similar pattern in their study on 12 international students' experience of using religion to cope with acculturative stress in the US context: the students 'held their belief as an ultimate value in and of itself, while still turning to their spirituality for coping in times of stress'.

Thus, religion gained significance in the accounts of my research participants not just in terms of being a migrant or a minority member but also, and perhaps more importantly, in terms of being human. While it is clear that migration or

the experience of growing up as a member of minority can affect the ways in which people turn to faith and their experiences of religion, one has to avoid the trap of discussing the religiousness of migrants and other minority members as a phenomenon that is separate or somehow fundamentally different to that of majority populations.

9.8 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have outlined and discussed five central areas through which religion affects the acculturation of Russian-speakers living in Finland and minority members more broadly: practical support, identity formation and maintenance, social adaptation, psychological adaptation, and as a source of support in times of difficulties. Importantly, this chapter has also shown that the religiousness of migrants and other minority members should not be approached solely through the prism of their minority position or migratory experiences.

As expected, the significance of religion for adaptation varies greatly from person to person. The fieldwork in different religious communities and the interviews with employees of the Finnish Orthodox church suggest that, while (in particular the Orthodox) church promotes multiculturalism and integration in many ways, it also centres the Finnish state in several ways during services (such as in prayers) as well as outside of them. Moreover, while some actors within religious communities talk about integration in ways that resemble the current academic understanding of the term, recognising the central role of the maintenance of heritage culture(s), others use it to connote something closer to assimilation. This difference in viewpoints, along with regional differences in availability of Russian-speaking services and the language skills and interests of the church employees, mean that support for acculturation provided by religious organisations will vary greatly from parish to parish and church to church.

With relation to this, it is important to note that, while it has been suggested that privatised forms of religion do not lead to similar levels of communal support and social capital as regular religious participation (Putnam 2000, p. 74), many interviewees highlighted the role of personal faith and private practice in their process of acculturation, particularly in times of difficulties. Even those who thought of themselves as non-religious would sometimes resort to prayer in particularly challenging situations, and it seems that different forms of religion may support acculturation in different ways.

The chapter shows that religion's relationship with (other forms of) self-identification is not always straightforward. On one hand, it is often a central ingredient *of* and can even function *as* an ethnic or national identity (see chapter 2). On the other hand, religious texts, precepts and leaders often emphasise cosmopolitanism and the equality of all people, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or cultural background. This was also the case for the religious organisations I observed during fieldwork.

With relation to social adaptation, the fieldwork suggests that attending Russian-language services did not necessarily encourage bridging, while atten-

dance of the mainstream services did not necessarily support bonding. Taking into account the feeling, widespread among the participants, of a lack of a Russian-speaking community on one hand and the importance ascribed to the Russian language on the other (see chapters 5 and 6), it can be asked whether religious organisations wishing to support acculturation should put more emphasis on fostering connections between Russian-speakers (and other minorities) in addition to encouraging their acculturation into the Finnish society.

The chapter provides further support for the idea, established in previous studies, that religion can help prevent problems relating to acculturation. This was certainly true in the sense that religious participation related to social adaptation (as shown in section 9.4) and that religion - and faith, in particular - often facilitated psychological adaptation (as discussed in section 9.5). In times of trouble, many interviewees recounted drawing on a mix of resources that could be described as religious - faith, trust in God, religious participation, and practical support provided by religious communities. In fact, one of the important ways in which religion may gain significance in the lives of minorities is through its mediating effect on difficulties, including discrimination.

Overall, this chapter gives a rather positive view of religion's relation to adaptation. Frederiks (2015) has pointed out that, in general, researchers tend to focus on the positive role of religion in the lives of migrants, ignoring the potential tensions and conflicts arising in the context of religion, and warned against the tendency to romanticise migrants' religious communities. During the fieldwork, I did not observe any particular tensions or conflicts nor did these emerge in interviews, with the exception of the few relatively small instances discussed above and the accounts of two Jehovah's Witnesses who told me that they were sometimes rebutted rather rudely when approaching people. However, as the interviewees saw this as something that happens in many countries - 'Well, it's not easy being a Witness anywhere. They don't like us anywhere, they push us away everywhere' (Nikolai) - it did not particularly affect their acculturation with relation to the Finnish society (in contrast to their experiences of ethnicity-based discrimination, discussed in chapter 7).

This should not be taken as evidence that religion's effect on acculturation is solely positive; my research questions, positionality (see section 3.7), choice of fieldwork locations, and various other factors may have affected these findings. What is clear, however, is that the relatively low religious membership numbers of Finland's Russian-speakers tell but a small part of the story of religion's role in their process of acculturation.

Chapter 10

Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

> When I feel that it's difficult, my mum tells me to think about where I come from. If you know the [Church of the] Saviour on the Spilled Blood, it was designed by our relative. This gives me hope, and support, too. Because what is happening right now, it's very easy to feel... what is going on right now in the world is very difficult. And to think that that is where our family comes from, and that that is what I stand for... and concretely, that the Church stands, I think that helps me a lot. The fact that it is standing is something concrete that you can rely on. In this way, I feel very Russian.

While not every one of my research participants could say that their relatives had designed a world-famous monument, the above account accentuates three important themes highlighted by this thesis. The first concerns the relational, complex, and context-related nature of identities. The second relates to culture's role as an identity resource, 'a sense of beauty', as described by Vera (see chapter 6). In a situation where being a Russian(-speaker) was not always easy, and was perceived by several interviewees to carry negative connotations, interviewees often described Russian culture as something that they could be proud of. Even those who were explicitly critical of both Russia and their fellow Russian-speakers in Finland (and this was fairly common, as discussed in chapters 6 and 7) often expressed affinity to the cultural side of Russianness - art, literature, architecture and, perhaps first of all, the Russian language.

The third - and perhaps the most central - theme highlighted by the above account is the support provided by the church, both in practical and in symbolic terms. While most of my research participants did not describe themselves as active parishioners, many found that religion and faith had supported - and, in many cases, continued supporting - their processes of acculturation in many ways. Yet the importance of religion was not restricted to the support that it provided: faith was perceived as a value in and of itself.

In this thesis, I have explored the acculturation of Russian-speakers living in Finland through the lenses of religion and identity. The study was motivated by a gap in research regarding the acculturation of Russian-speakers and the relationship between acculturation and religion. In this final chapter of the thesis, I will discuss its key findings, consider their relevance in the field of acculturation research, and provide recommendations for future studies.

10.2 Contributions of the thesis

The original contributions made by this thesis can be broadly divided into four categories. Firstly, the thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of the processes of acculturation on both theoretical and empirical levels. Secondly, and in relation to the previous point, it adds empirical evidence to the emerging field of research exploring the relationship between acculturation and religion. Thirdly, it makes an important contribution by providing more information on Finland's Russian-speaking community, a growing minority group that deserves more attention (Varjonen et al. 2017).

Finally, in employing an integrative mixed methods design combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the thesis makes a methodological contribution through answering the call for more mixed methods research into acculturation. I will discuss these contributions in more detail in the next sections.

10.2.1 Theories of acculturation

This thesis has focused on the questions of acculturation. The topic is important: Ward et al. (2018) go as far as arguing that there has never been a more pressing need to understand acculturation and people's everyday experiences in multicultural environments.

I have approached acculturation and adaptation with the help of the acculturation framework presented in chapter 2 (see figure 2.2). The framework highlights the need for considering the interplay between the group-level and individual acculturation, the context of reception, and the moderating factors affecting acculturation.

Acculturation strategies are one of the most important - and perhaps the most commonly discussed - of these factors. Like religion and identity - which, I have argued, are important moderating factors in their own right - they may for their part help explain why different acculturating individuals experience different acculturation outcomes. At the same time, they also reflect and are affected by the context of acculturation, as shown in chapters 5 and 7.

Integration was clearly the most popular strategy among the survey respondents, providing further evidence for the much-supported theory that migrants and other minority members tend to prefer integration over other acculturation strategies (Berry 2021). At the same time, the analysis showed that a fifth strategy, cosmopolitanism, was nearly as popular as integration and considerably more popular than the three remaining strategies. I had decided to

include questions measuring the cosmopolitan strategy in the survey in recognition of the theoretical discussions suggesting that what has traditionally been understood as marginalisation may in some cases signal either individualism or a more global outlook (chapter 2). This idea was also supported by the qualitative data, which showed how some interviewees chose to ignore ethnic and/or national boundary drawing in favour of a more global outlook and supranational identifications. As such, my thesis contributes to the literature (e.g. Gillespie et al. 2010; Kunst and Sam 2013; see also chapter 5) suggesting that acculturation research needs to differentiate between marginalisation and cosmopolitanism. It also supports the hypothesis that, despite some similarities between the two strategies, this cosmopolitan strategy does not come with the negative consequences of marginalisation.

Even when a cosmopolitan strategy is not explicitly chosen by the acculturating individual, the rise in supranational identifications, transnational activities, and other forms of globalisation make understanding cultural diversity that goes beyond two groups central to understanding contemporary acculturation. This thesis suggests that the model of one heritage culture and one majority culture, frequently employed by acculturation studies (see chapter 2), is often not sufficient for assessing the acculturation of diverse minority groups, such as Russian-speakers.

With relation to this, I suggest that we need to broaden our understanding of acculturation. Most importantly, we need to consider what are the cultures that come into contact with each other in the process of acculturation: are the differences always about ethnic or national boundaries? The fieldwork suggests that for some Russian-speakers, the challenges of acculturation were related not to trying to combine two or more ethnic or national cultures (which they often found easy or viewed as the 'natural' state of things), but to trying to adjust their own multicultural realities to the pressures of monoculturalism and demands of disambiguation (see chapter 5).

10.2.2 The relationship between religion and acculturation

Religion and religiosity are complex phenomena. Drawing on constructivist understanding of religion, I defined it inductively, parting from empirical evidence. On the basis of the qualitative fieldwork, the domains of religiosity in my sample turned out to be believing, belonging, practising and participating (see chapter 8). This was confirmed by the survey, which also showed that believing (and faith in God in particular) was the most common of these actions, suggesting that the role of faith in acculturation merits particular attention.

In chapter 9, I described and discussed the five ways in which religion related to the processes of acculturation among the Russian-speakers in my sample (see table 10.1). Firstly, religious communities were often an important source of practical support, particularly in the early stages of acculturation.

Secondly, religion could be a source of both identity maintenance and identity construction, although it has to be noted that only part of the connections

I had hypothesised on the basis of the qualitative fieldwork were found in the statistical analyses. In the light of the findings discussed in the previous section, of particular interest here is, firstly, the complexity of the relationship between religion and ethnic identity (particularly in the case of Russian identity and Orthodoxy, a relationship which my data suggests may be less straightforward than is often implied); and secondly, the connection between religion and cosmopolitanism, highlighted by many research participants and explicitly promoted by some religious organisations, the Easter celebrations of Orthodox congregations being a prime example of this (see section 9.3.4).

Thirdly, religion can contribute to minority members' social adaptation. This theme emerged strongly from the qualitative data and was confirmed by the quantitative model I created. Fourthly, the interviews suggest that religion can also support psychological adaptation, providing people with an anchor, a sense of meaning, a mental resource that they could draw on. With relation to this, the fifth area that emerged from the fieldwork was religion's role as a buffer against difficulties, both those related to the processes of acculturation and those more personal in nature.

These areas were similar, but not identical to the types of impact of religion on acculturation I had identified in my literature review, in chapter 2: religion as a mental resource and a buffer against acculturative stress, religion as a practical and social resource, religion as a source of bridging and bonding capital, and religion as a source of continuity of identity. The literature review also suggested that, in some cases, religion's role in acculturation could be negative. This seemed to be the case mostly when religion was connected to experiences of discrimination in the domain of religion. This did not seem to be a particular problem for Russian-speakers; in fact, as shown in figure 5.2, practising one's religion was the area of cultural adaptation that the survey respondents reported the least difficulties in.

Notably, the data suggest a two-way relationship between religion and acculturation. It was not only that religion and faith could support the processes of acculturation, but also that they had often gained significance in participants' lives following migration or in the process of acculturation. A number of interviewees credited their move to Finland with either finding faith or becoming more religiously active.

Here, it has to be noted that drawing on religion, faith, or resources provided by religious communities in the process of acculturation or in time of difficulties did not mean that the research participants had an instrumentalist approach to religion. On the contrary, many emphasised religion and faith as values in and of themselves, underlining that religion was 'not about finding your place' in a new society, but about something that many participants deemed much more important than that.

Religion's role in Acculturation
1. Practical support
2. Identity construction and maintenance
3. Social adaptation
4. Psychological adaptation
5. Buffer against difficulties

Table 10.1: Religion's role in the process of acculturation

10.2.3 The lived experience of being a Russian-speaker in Finland

One of the clearest themes repeating throughout this thesis is the internal diversity of Finland's Russian-speaking minority, evident both on the group level - with Russian language uniting native speakers from many different ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds - and in case of individual members of this minority. As shown in chapter 6, nearly half of all respondents identified with more than one ethnic group, and many disclosed cosmopolitan, European, and other supranational identifications.

At the same time, some research participants described their identities in essentialist terms, viewing them as natural and stable. This prevalence of both essentialist and non-essentialist identity discourses highlights the need for caution when making generalisations about contemporary identifications: the fluidity and hybridity of identities should be neither overstated nor ignored. Moreover, it is important to differentiate between the two concepts: hybrid or multiple identities are not necessarily open to change, and identity change does not necessarily lead to greater hybridity (see chapter 6).

It is also necessary to recognise the intersectionality of belonging. Although this concept is often acknowledged by scholars to be difficult to operationalise, the thesis managed to demonstrate how different levels of ethnocultural identities intersect both with each other and with other identities, such as those relating to gender, class, and education (see chapters 5 and 6).

Notably, the notions of class and culturedness were often employed in constructing difference within the Russian-speaking community. This provides further empirical support for Cohen's (2011) suggestion that acculturation studies should differentiate between individual's attitudes towards their heritage culture(s) and those towards the community of 'co-ethnics' (in this case, other Russian-speakers) in their country of residence. As shown in chapter 6, there is often great variance between the two, suggesting that even the addition of the fifth acculturation strategy, that of cosmopolitanism (see chapter 5), may not be sufficient for capturing the wealth of different cultures, identities, loyalties and belongings with relation to which acculturation takes place in contemporary societies.

Yet the fieldwork also showed that, despite the diversity described above and regardless of their personal identifications, Russian-speakers are regularly

perceived as Russians by members of the majority population. This relates to questions of discrimination and experiences of hostility towards 'Russians', which can be a serious problem for Russian-speakers, as discussed in chapter 7. Russian-speaking women, in particular, can find themselves targeted by negative stereotyping at the intersections of gender and ethnicity.

The boundary drawing, described above with relation to class, culturedness and education, was also present in the accounts of discrimination. Many interviewees engaged in what I have deemed narratives of responsibility, explaining discrimination with history, focusing on the behaviours of Russian-speakers and highlighting the importance of reacting to any 'unpleasant experiences' in the right way, 'to avoid making the situation worse'.

At the same time, others engaged in narratives of resistance, questioning ethnic essentialism and expressing solidarity with their fellow Russian-speakers as well as with other minority groups, both in Finland and on the global level. As highlighted by several chapters across this thesis, it is important to avoid 'groupism' in discussions and depictions of the Russian-speaking minority.

10.2.4 Methodological pluralism

In recent years, the calls for more methodological pluralism in the field of acculturation research have intensified (see chapter 3). Acculturation is a complex, multidimensional process, and a mixed methods approach is well suited for uncovering this complexity.

While I did encounter many of the problems related to mixed methods research during my fieldwork - from restrictions related to resources to questions related to operationalisation of the same concepts in different parts of this study - I believe that it was worthwile to pursue this methodological pluralism. In fact, many of the findings of this study - such as the role played by religion in the field of social adaptation and the importance that experiences of othering have in the process of acculturation - emerged at the intersections of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Using mixed methods allowed me to discuss a wider base of evidence as well as form a fuller and more colourful picture of the acculturation of Russian-speakers than would have been possible with either qualitative or quantitative methods alone. Based on this experience, I would like to encourage methodological pluralism in the future study of acculturation.

10.3 Areas for further research

In this thesis, I have approached Finland's Russian-speaking community as a whole. I believe this to be a good approach in general, as the fragmentation of research may prevent us from forming a comprehensive picture of the acculturation of Russian-speakers, who are often grouped together on the basis of their language (see chapter 7). Yet this approach also brought about challenges related to, for instance, the creation of the survey (see chapter 3). Moreover, as discussed in chapters 5 and 6, in addition to individual-level differences in the

processes of acculturation, there also seem to be notable differences in acculturation and adaptation of different 'sub-groups' of Russian-speakers.

In particular, this thesis suggests that there is a pressing need for a more complete understanding of the adaptation of Finland-raised Russian-speakers, whose acculturation landscapes, strategies, challenges and aims often differ greatly from those of the first-generation migrants (see section 5.2.4). With relation to this, it is notable that many acculturation studies focus on adaptation into the 'receiving society', which is not necessarily the most fruitful approach with relation to those acculturating individuals who have grown up in this society. Cultural maintenance and cosmopolitan identification, in particular, are promising areas for future research.

In the course of my fieldwork, I complemented the other qualitative data with both semi-structured and less informal discussions with church employees. Initially, I approached these interviews and discussions as something that could provide useful background information for the fieldwork. However, as the research progressed, interesting questions started to emerge about how employees see Russian-speakers and other minorities within the church and how they understand acculturation - a topic that would merit further exploration. Similarly, it would be interesting to survey the views of parishioners belonging to the majority population in multicultural parishes. It could be argued that the idea of acculturation as a two-way street where changes happen in both minority and majority populations are particularly visible in locations such as the Orthodox Parish of Helsinki, where parishioners belonging to the dominant group frequently come to contact with other languages and cultural elements (see section 9.3.4). While most researchers now acknowledge that acculturation affects both minority groups and majority populations, a large part of acculturation studies - like this one - tend to focus on those experiencing major acculturation. The changes that the dominant groups and their members undergo as a result of contact with other cultures and the effects that these have on minority acculturation merit more attention (Kunst et al. 2021).

The end of my fieldwork was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is already some evidence that this 'online turn' may affect the patterns of religious participation also in the long-term (see Saloranta 2020). Evidence collected during the fieldwork suggests that it may also bring certain changes to religion's role as a moderating factor in the process of acculturation (as well as the process of acculturation in general). For instance, while lack of physical participation can subvert religious organisations' position as a potential answer to the 'question of loneliness' (see chapters 5 and 9) and a provider of bridging, bonding and linking ties, online modes of worship made participation possible also for those who live far from their nearest parish or are not able to attend services for other reasons. The fieldwork also suggested a change in the mode of participation among parishioners; online services provided an option for 'light' participation and blurred the border between (private) practice and (public) participation (chapter 8). It remains to be seen whether these changes are durable; at the moment of the writing of this chapter, it seems likely that religious organisations will adopt at least some of the practices created during the pandemic as

part of their regular activities. In any case, this is a promising area for further research.

10.4 Final thoughts

As discussed in chapter 3, a pragmatist research paradigm centres the goals of research and the benefits that it may bring. It is often connected to the pursuit of social justice, and encourages researchers to ask question about why they do the research they do. These questions are particularly important when studying minority groups. Consequently, perhaps the most important - albeit often unspoken - question guiding my research was how it can benefit the community that I study.

One potential way of making an impact is through the dissemination of research findings. During the course of my fieldwork, I participated in several conferences and seminars which allowed me to share my work both within and, less frequently, outside of academia. I hope to continue with and expand on this in the future.

Yet dissemination of findings and other information also - or perhaps, I might suggest, primarily - happens in less formal circumstances. For instance, after I shared a few sentences on the central findings of chapter 7 on my social media story, I received several messages from young Russian-speakers. *Thank you for talking about this*, one of them wrote, in Finnish. *Because sometimes it feels like I'm the only one who notices these things.*

As this message suggests, and as is also suggested by my fieldwork, there is a clear need for a better understanding of Finland's Russian-speaking minority, and perhaps also for public discussion or at least a recognition of the challenges that some of them sometimes experience. At the same time, while highlighting challenges faced by acculturating individuals is useful and important, it is also important to avoid portraying Russian-speakers and other minorities in a way that emphasises their otherness, perhaps even constructing it in the process. As an Orthodox priest that I interviewed put it: *A migrant is a parishioner, a person, an Orthodox or a non-Orthodox like any other. If you know how to treat people well in general, then you'll know how to treat him, too.*

Appendix A

Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

	Alias	Gender	Age Group[1]	Year of first interview	No of interviews	Language of interview	Live / Skype
1	Mikael	M	18-24	2017	2	Finnish	live
2	Anastasia	F	25-34	2017	3	Finnish	live
3	Anton	M	25-34	2017	1	Russian	skype
4	Olga	F	25-34	2017	1	Russian	live
5	Vera	F	25-34	2017	3	Russian, English	live
6	Zhanna	F	45-54	2017	1	Finnish	live
7	Kira	F	18-24	2017	1	Finnish	live
8	Mihail	M	35-44	2017	1	Russian	live
9	Elvira	F	18-24	2017	1	Russian	live
10	Sergey	M	35-44	2017	2	Russian	live
11	Laura	F	18-24	2018	1	Finnish, Russian	live
12	Jelena	F	65+	2018	1	Russian	live
13	Galya	F	55-64	2018	1	Russian	live
14	Tamara	F	25-34	2018	2	Russian	live
15	Anya	F	18-24	2018	1	Russian	live
16	Yakov	M	45-54	2018	1	Russian	skype
17	Natalia	F	35-44	2018	1	Russian	skype
18	Maksim	M	35-44	2018	2	Russian	skype
19	Oleg	M	35-44	2018	1	Russian	skype
20	Tanya	F	25-34	2019	1	Finnish, Russian	live
21	Inga	F	65+	2019	1	Russian	live
22	Maria	F	55-64	2019	1	Russian	live
23	Nikolai	M	35-44	2019	1	Russian	live
24	Evgenia	F	25-34	2019	1	Russian	live
25	Yuri	M	35-44	2019	1	Russian	live
26	Alina	F	25-34	2019	1	Russian, English	live

[1] Age at the time of first interview

Appendix B

Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire in English

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