

Dima Sinkevitch

EMPLOYMENT OF RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS IN FINLAND

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ABSTRACT

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Sinkevitch, Dima

Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

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Supervisor: Wikman, Marina

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There are 150,000 immigrants in Finland. Russians are the second largest group after Estonians. The main purpose of this thesis was to help Russian immigrant get employed in Finland. I tried to map the problems areas through interviews with both Russian immigrants and Finnish employers. The first issue of my theoretical part was to explain who the immigrants are, and what the reasons for migration are. The second part deals with cultural differences, which is supported by Geert Hofstede's 5D-model. There are some differences, but this doesn't seem to be a big problem for most immigrants.

The most important part of this thesis is the history between Russia and Finland, which is eventful and quite painful for both countries. The history seems to have an effect even in the present day, even though the most painful and burdensome things happened nearly 70 years ago. The preconceptions cannot be explained by the history alone, but it plays a major part in it. Issues like education and the fluency of Finnish language are important as well, since being able to communicate in Finnish is vital for employment.

The research was not very extensive, but with in-depth interviews I was able to get very close to the immigrants and I believe their answers to be accurate and truthful. After the research was made, and the problem areas mapped out I was able to give a few recommendations about how to ease their troubles they face in Finnish society.

The research was done through nine interviews, five of them being immigrants and four of them being employers. The interviews were able to paint a clear picture about

the main problems faced by Russian immigrants when they arrive to Finland in hopes of finding a job and way to support themselves and their families.

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1 INTRODUCTION

When immigrants move into a new country they have a number of challenges and problems they are likely to face. Finding a job is a crucial part of the integration process, and it can turn out to be quite difficult for quite a few reasons. The importance of finding a job cannot be understated, as having income is where people get their livelihood and respect. Not only is finding a job important for the income, but having a job also prevents people from getting depressed or anti-social in general which will hinder the integration process. When people start describing themselves, one of the first things that come up is the job they have, which demonstrates how important part of our lives it is. The main purpose of this thesis was to find out which issues affect the employment of Russian immigrants in Finland.

Finland has over 150,000 immigrants from all over the world. Russians are the second largest immigrant group in Finland. In this thesis I also use the “Living conditions of immigrants” research. In addition to Russians this research deals with Estonians, Somalis and Vietnamese immigrants as well. I also make a comparison between these immigrant groups.

The main issue is to find out the main reasons which affect on the Russian immigrants employment, and for this thesis there are five main issues chosen; language, education, cultural differences, preconceptions and history between Russia and Finland.

2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore what kind of the challenges Russian immigrants face in employment when relocating to Finland. It is evident that moving into new environment always comes with difficulties in any surrounding, and possible cultural differences and also prejudices weigh into the aspect. In this study the relationship between Finnish and Russian people are viewed in the light of their history together, their own backgrounds and cultures, and how all this reflects to the employment situation of the Russian immigrants. During the research the idea is to also acknowledge the immigrants' own past professions and skills in terms of education and language, as those can bring a conflict of values into the problems and resistance Russians see in the Finnish job market.

The research is done by interviewing five Russian employees and four of employers to get a real life picture on the main problem areas. This qualitative frame is quite narrow, but it can be taken into account, that through correctly formed question topics the interviewees can share also general experiences and facts from their own Russian networks. Hence the study aims to understanding the main problem areas when adapting into the Finnish society and work life. The other side of the subject, the employers, is questioned for evaluating their professional relationship and experiences with the immigrant employees, and how the peer workers are disposed towards the situation. This part of the study also takes into account the human factors that may influence their responses. As the research part is not very extensive, the author's own experiences and background have an important role in all interaction with the theory and study part. The author's own experiences in theory or study part might restrict or skew the results a bit, and this has to be taken into consideration when analysing the study.

2.1 Research Problems

Russian immigrants can face a lot of challenges during their integration process to Finnish society. Russian people tend to face preconceptions all over the world, and Finland is not an exception. Most likely the reason behind these preconceptions is the history between Russia and Finland. The main research problems for this study are to find out what kind of preconceptions Russians face when they arrive to Finland, and how hard is it to find proper job in Finnish society being of Russian descent.

2.2 Research Objectives

The following research objectives were drawn from the above mentioned research problems:

- “What kind of cultural differences there are?”
- “How history has affected the prevailing preconceptions?”
- “What kind of preconceptions Russian immigrants encounter in Finland?”
- “What affects getting a job?”
- “What are the challenges when working in Finland?”

2.3 Conceptual Framework

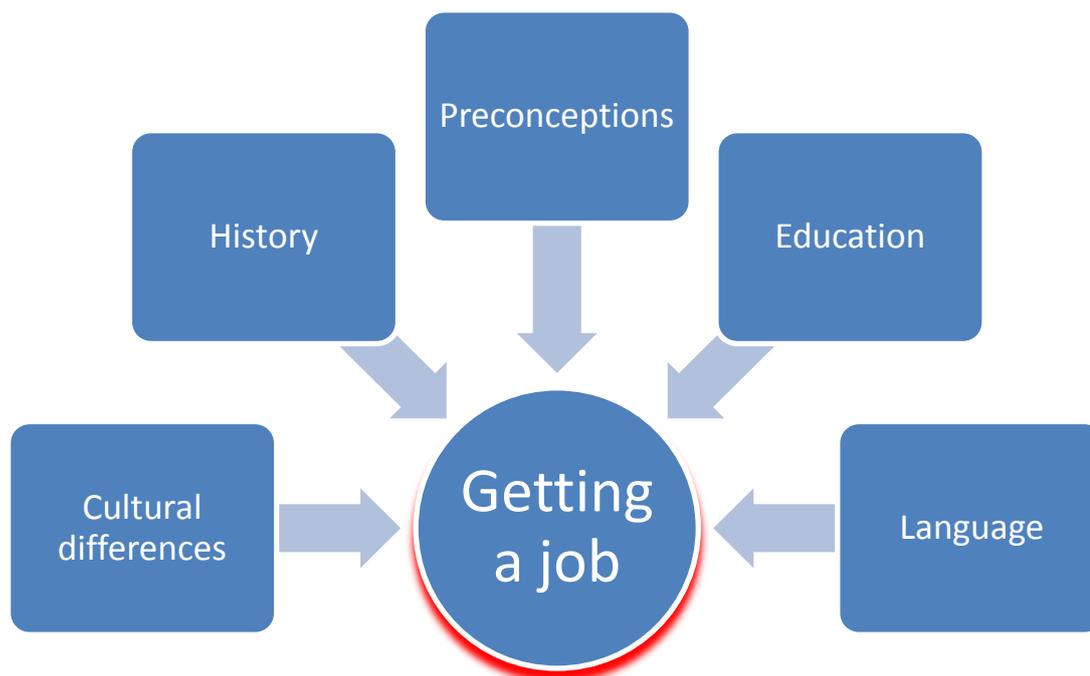


Figure 1, Conceptual Framework

Immigrants motives are often hope for a job and a better life. The employment cycle, and being part of Finnish society and being a productive member of it has a few phases; applying for a job, getting the job, doing the actual work, finishing the work and finding a new job. Things that cannot be controlled are issues like health of labor markets, and the general financial situation. This thesis concentrates on the main problems Russian immigrants have when trying to find a job, such as cultural differences and preconceptions Russian immigrants face. Under examination is also the history between Russia and Finland, which still affects the present day. The language skills and education of Russian immigrants are also issues which affect on their success in finding a job. (Figure 1)

3 IMMIGRATION

This chapter explains what immigration and immigrant mean, and what the causes of migration are. I will also speak briefly about the Finnish migration history, which is a relatively new term in the Finnish language. Immigrants have been a topic of discussion during the last few months more than usual, due to the parliamentary election. (Kansan Uutiset) Jussi Förbom has examined the debates in the parliament from 1998 to 2010. He wanted to find out if the immigration debate has intensified only in recent years. It turned out that immigration has not been discussed modestly and constructively even in the earlier periods. Strong language is always used. Förbom has paid particular attention to the wordings. Parliament has over the years been concerned about the number of asylum seekers, which has been getting out of hand. People's coming to the country has been described as a flood. Tough terms have always been connected to the immigration, such as asylum tourism and anchor child.

In Förbom's words these terms are transmitted easily to another speaker in question times and sessions. At the same time the meanings behind the words will disappear. In this sense, many people have the impression that Finland is awash of immigrant. In this chapter I will present statistics, and explain that Finland is one of those EU countries which have the fewest immigrants.

Eve Kyntäjä writes that in the media and in everyday discussions, migrants are often attached in negative context, such as crime, prostitution and illegal labour. Immigrants are labelled as work-shy social benefit abusers and living parasites at expense of the Finnish taxpayers. This label is inconceivable, as many Finns have been immigrants themselves, and it has not been a long time since masses of people moved from Finland to Sweden and elsewhere. (www.kansanuutiset.fi)

3.1 Who are the immigrants

Reasons for moving vary greatly amongst people; poor families looking for better environment; an international sports star going to a country with lower taxes; a man moving abroad to join his wife; hordes of people wanting to escape an invading

army— these all are migrants, but in very different situation of life and they have completely different reasons for leaving their original surroundings. However, the countries that take them in are also diverse, hence they have different reasons for wanting to accept or reject these possible immigrants. (Meilaender 2001, 19)

According to Senior Actuary, Markus Repo, Foreign relations are such a fresh topic in Finland that sometimes the terms can be confusing. There are too many names for immigrants, such as: foreigner, expatriate, emigrant, migrant, alien... The subject has in fact brought another challenge for the population statistics. There is a growing demand for the information about "immigrants", but it is not always known what kinds of people are meant by this. I want to mention this because the matter of a fact is that if the Senior Actuary does not understand what the questioner wants, it should be understood that the term immigrant is relatively new in the Finnish language.

During 90's and 2000s the reasons for immigrating to Finland have been generally other than directly work related. The most common of the reasons have been and is still family. However, work based immigration seems to be growing over this motive. Because of the population's age distribution and therefore decreasing workforce there is a new aim to increase the number of people moving to Finland from EU and outside of EU. Exact estimate for the motives of the foreign people arriving to Finland throughout times is hard to present. A foreigner can have possibly arrived to Finland for more than one reasons, and the motive for staying can after a while change from the original. (www.intermin.fi)

3.2 Immigration history of Finland

Understanding the immigration history and the reasons behind immigration in general is important to know to understand why most Russian immigrants come to Finland. Throughout the history people have moved to other countries in hopes for a better life, and this is what Finnish people have done in the past. These days, as Finland is going strong the emigration is getting lower, and immigration is growing. If people

understand that Finnish people have also been the ones immigrating to other countries, they could have more sympathy for immigrants moving to Finland these days.

Throughout the history people of Finland has left the country in search of wealth and better future. Before independence and even before that the trend was principally from Finland to abroad. Finnish emigrants moved to the United States, Australia, Sweden and other parts of Europe. Few of the "American cousins" returned back to Finland with more or with less wealth. But even more was never seen back home again. (Meilaender 2001, 9)

In the turn of 1960's and 1970's there was a strong emigrating stream to Sweden. Some of these emigrants returned after a few years but according to the Swedish statistics (SCB) there are still about 170,000 Finnish born people living in Sweden. There are no exact figures of how many expatriate Finns, thus emigrated Finnish people, live in different parts of the world. In 2010 during the general election there were over 200,000 Finnish adults of age living abroad. This figure does not give a full picture, as many of the people moving abroad have abandoned the Finnish nationality. Only every third of the Finnish people living in Sweden are of Finnish nationality. (www.stat.fi)

3.3 Immigrants in Finland

Moving to Finland was quite modest before the break down of the Soviet Union in the beginning of 1990's when the immigration to Finland started to grow. The motives had to do principally with humanitarian aspects. The number of people looking for asylum increased and also the official Ingrian Finnish returning migrants found their ways back.

There were 132,708 foreign nationals in Finland in the end of 2007, which is about 2.5 percent of the total population. The share of foreign speakers is about 3.3 percent. Immigrant nationals form a diversity of 170 groups of nationalities in Finland. From the old EU countries Finland has the smallest share of foreigners. People born abroad

constituted 202,528 people living in the country, which is about 3,8 percent of the population.

In November 30, 2008 the amount of foreigners was about 142,600 people. There is a table below describing the current statistics. (www.intermin.fi)

Nationality	2009	%	Annual change, %	2010	%	Annual change, %
Estonia	25 510	16,4	12,9	29 080	17,3	14,0
Russia	28 210	18,1	4,8	28 426	16,9	0,8
Sweden	8 506	5,5	0,8	8 510	5,1	0,0
Somalia	5 570	3,6	13,2	6 593	3,9	18,4
China	5 180	3,3	12,1	5 559	3,3	7,3
Iraq	3 978	2,6	22,9	5 024	3,0	26,3
Thailand	4 497	2,9	14,4	5 021	3,0	11,7
Turkey	3 809	2,4	11,1	3 973	2,4	4,3
Germany	3 628	2,3	3,6	3 715	2,2	2,4
India	3 168	2,0	15,8	3 468	2,1	9,5
Others	63 649	40,9	8,0	68 585	40,8	7,8
TOTAL	155 705	100	8,7	167 954	100	7,9

Figure 2. Foreigners in Finland (Statistics Finland Official Website)

Updated: March 23, 2011 - Statistics Finland, population statistics)

According to the public debate one would think that Finland is filled with a large number of immigrants. In reality however, the number is the seventh lowest in the Europe. Researcher says that the disparity between the number of foreigners in Finland and the cascading of the debate exist for several reasons. Debate can possibly arise from relatively insignificant reasons, University of Helsinki researcher Tuomas Martikainen says. The bloom in the immigration debate can be partly explained by the economic downturn and the proximity of the 2011 elections. According to Martikainen this is also affected by the fact that a phenomenon is relatively young for the Finnish.

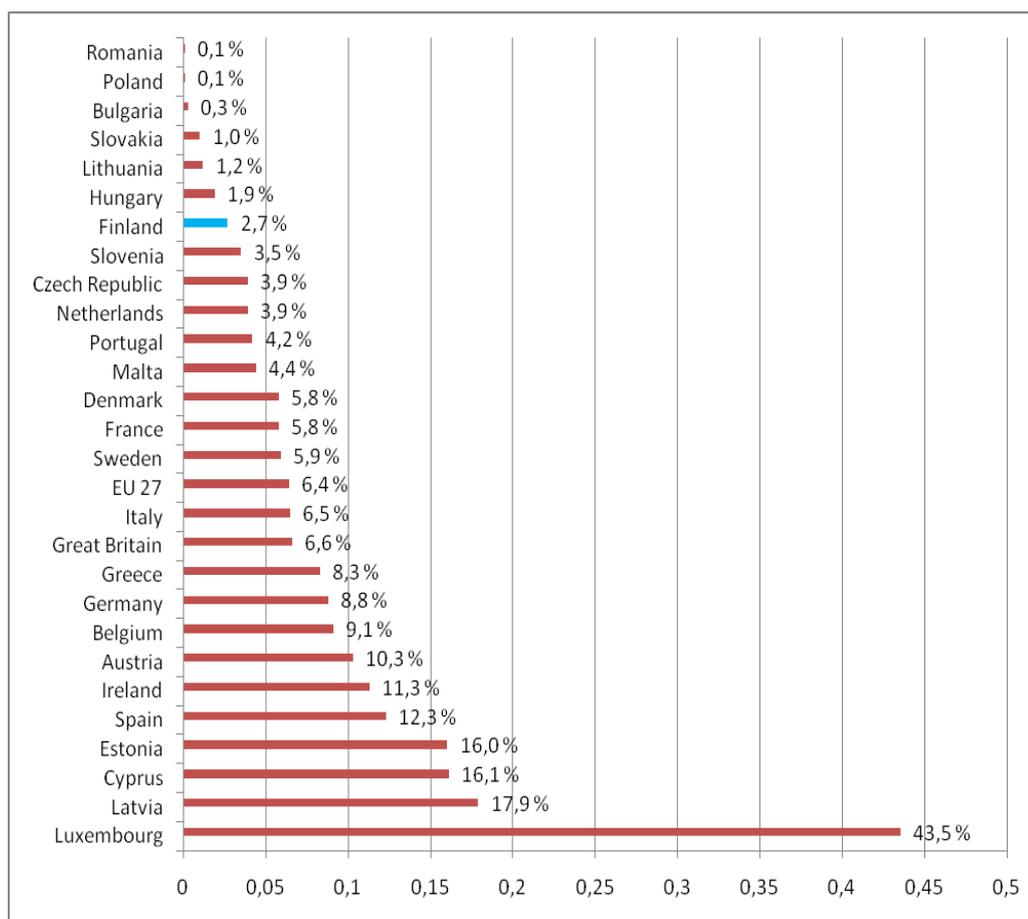


Figure 3 Väestötilastot, Tilastokeskus 2011

3.4 Foreigners in labor market

There are about 130,000 workers with a foreign background in the labor market. In 2007 there were 70,000 people with foreign background working in Finland (employee's mother tongue other than Finnish, Swedish or Saame). In 2008 they were already 79,000, hence over 10 percent more than the previous year. When the amount of work places grew in the whole country by 8,000, it can be thought that all of these "extra placements" were for foreigners.

In addition to these 79,000 workers according to the Statistics there are about 50,000 other workers that have been sent from abroad, rented etc. and that do not belong to the Finnish nationals or to the labor force of the country. There is very little information about this part of the labor force. Their age structure, education and other facts are not known, nor the industries in which they work.

Temporary foreign workers are many in construction, for instance. In the construction field there are actually much more foreigners employed than what the 4,000 foreign and permanently in-country living construction workers in the register.

Altogether there are therefore about 130,000 foreign temporary and permanent employees in Finland, hence over 5 percent of all workers.

Some of the foreigners do jobs in the less paid field, such as in cleaning and in the less challenging tasks of construction field and retail. The industries suffering from the lack of workforce, such as social and health and traffic services also hire foreigners.

In 2008 almost a quarter (15,000) of the foreigners permanently living in the country worked in business services, of which 12,000 worked in cleaning services. Industrial companies employed 11,000 foreigners, of which 3,300 worked in the manufacturing of electronic devices. Retail employed 8,000, accommodation and nutrition operations 7,000, just as social and health services, traffic operations 5,000 and education also 5,000 foreign workers. Relatively the most foreigners can be found in cleaning services, in hotel and accommodation operations and in the electronic manufacturing. (www.stat.fi)

3.5 The employment of the immigrants takes time

Right after the 1990's recession the employment was especially difficult: Only 15 percent of the immigrants were employed; of the Finnish people this figure was only 30 percent too. Towards the end of the decade the employment situation however improved annually by over 10 percent for Finnish people. The employment of all the foreigners improved only by about 5 percent a year.

The people migrating to Finland in the year of 2000 they had already a better starting point: the Finnish employment percentage was 45, and of all the foreigners 30 percent. When all the foreigners are counted in, the employment percentage was over 13 percent below the country's average level in 2008. The recession in the beginning of

2000's impacted more on immigrant's employment than it did for Finnish people's employment.

As a conclusion it could be stated that the employment of the immigrants is truly a long process. The foreigners that entered in 2005 are about 5 percent lower in employment percentage, than those who immigrated earlier. This is because they have had less time to adapt into Finnish society, and according to the study the employment rate can arise as long as ten years. (www.stat.fi)

4 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

4.1 Hofstede's 5D Model

Hofstede examined the cultural differences, and got material of more than fifty countries. He came up with four different factors by which cultural differences can be explained and understood. These factors are power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. Long-Term Orientation is the fifth dimension of Hofstede which was added after the original four to try to distinguish the difference in thinking between the East and West. Unfortunately Russia has not been measured in long-term orientation; this is the reason why it is not explained in next chapters. (Hofstede 1993, 14-15)

There are differences in the two cultures even if they share common history. The biggest differences can be noticed in power distance, uncertainty avoidance and individualism.

PDI – Power Distance Index
 IDV - Individualism
 MAS – Masculinity
 UAI – Uncertainty Avoidance Index
 LTO – Long-Term Orientation

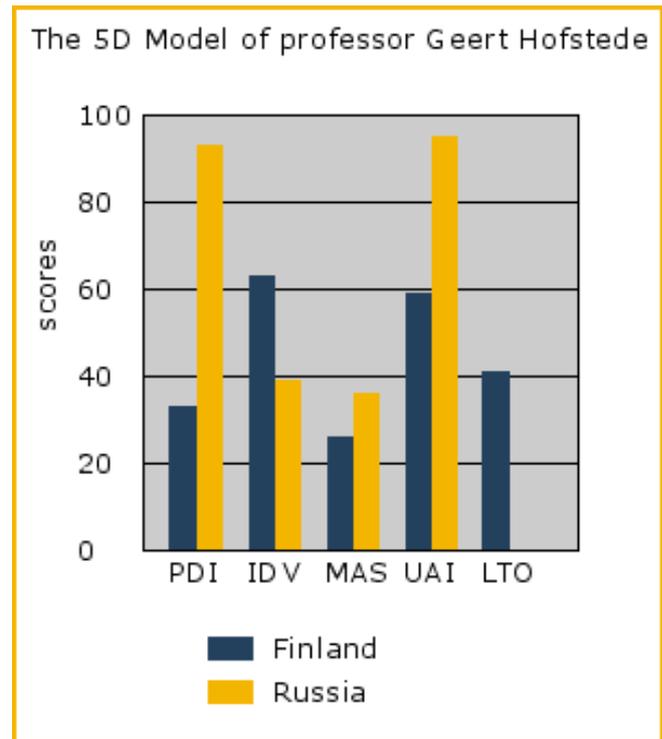


Figure 4. (Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, www-pages, 15.3.2011)

Power distance

Power distance in the society, amongst policy makers, shows the relation between the citizens, i.e. in how power is exercised, how it is shared, and what is the relationship between the authorities (Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 15). The same structures and practices are also reflected within the families, that is man - woman relations and father, mother and children settings.

Cultures where power distance is high, the prevailing inequality in the society is dramatic. Parents, teachers and supervisors have the authority, politeness is valued and a woman and a man in their roles are "conservative." (Hofstede 1993, 61). Parikka (2007, 23) stated that the Russians do not trust those in power and they do not expect the Russians to help. For this reason, the Russians take power more negatively.

Small power distance in turn gives everyone the same rights and benefits to society and bears the responsibility for the weak (economic security). In small power distance countries the democracy and equality strive strong, there are no obvious authorities and child rising is freer than in vast distance countries. (Hofstede 1993, 61) (Nunez 2007, 46)

Collectivism and Individualism

Another cultural factor comes from evaluating the relationships to other people. According to Hofstede (1993, 82) the distances of a vast majority of the cultures are generally collective and thinking is based on "we" format; hence there is group interest above self-interest. This explains why in large distance countries families are large (they have the children, parents, grandparents, godparents, uncles, aunts, and so on) and your network composed of fellow students, colleagues and neighbors. Also, shame is experienced as a group. (Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 17), Salminen & Poutanen (1998, 17) describe also the fact that in the Asian cultures, which includes Russia in Hofstede's studies, the trust and other pre-existing knowledge of another will contribute to further trust. Therefore, all relations with that country, the background investigation and establishment of contacts are important. Finnish people should note this specifically when doing business with Russians.

Similarly, in the small power distance cultures the thinking focuses on the "I" shape, i.e. the country is an individual and unique thinking prevails. Also, in the countries where the population has reasonable investments the "me-mentality" is becoming more intense. (Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 17-18) Hofstede also adds that "I" countries value honesty and verbal communication more than the countries of more power distance. Salminen & Poutanen (1998, 18) in turn say that in "I"-culture contacts are easy to create, once the label and the means of communication are managed.

Masculinity and femininity

As for the third factor to explain cultural differences, values are the ones to consider.

They are divided into masculine (hard values) and feminine (soft values). Masculinity is associated with societies in which roles are clearly different between men and women. Similarly, the femininity in such societies shows as roles that overlap. (Hofstede 1993, 122)

Masculine societies appreciate hard values, that is, success, competition, performance and know-how. In an early age, children are taught to compete and succeed, that is to be the best. It cannot directly be said that masculinity appears only in "I" countries or "we" countries, thus it can be in both. (Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 19) Similarly, the feminine countries value the soft values, i.e. relationships, getting along by themselves, unification, and sociability. In feminine countries, children are taught to be modest and equal. (Hofstede 1993, 122), Salmon & Poutanen (1998, 1920) highlight how these aspects appear in different cultures. Modesty is shown, for example, in how to dress, behave and what the various feelings show on faces. On the other hand it is precisely in these cultures where the label behavior is managed well.

Finland is the most masculine Nordic country, but otherwise it belongs to the feminine countries. "Finland has traditionally emphasized the survivor amongst the population. Success in school leads to a good place to study and work "(Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 19). Parikka (2007, 1942) highlights the fact that Russia is both a feminist and masculine country. He writes that for the beliefs in masculinity "leader must be tough" and "money talks". Similarly, the femininity shows in the permissiveness, as for example prostitution and corruption that are taken more lightly.

Uncertainty avoidance

The fourth factor explaining the cultural differences is the approach to uncertainty. This means that the culture's way to deal with situations that are unknown, threatening and uncertain (such as unemployment, illness and financial situation). In cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, people are generally busy, nervous, emotional, aggressive, anxious and active. Similarly, in the cultures with low uncertainty avoiding, people are calm, relaxed, carefree, and discreet, some would say even lazy. (Hofstede 1993, 167)

Salminen & Poutanen (1998, 1921) describe how strongly in the uncertainty averse cultures the uncertainty creates combats such as rigorous legislation, laws and religions. Similarly, less uncertainty in the culture means more flexible attitudes that are "rough" instructions and people acting more independently.

Hofstede (1993) explains further that in the cultures in which the uncertainty is avoided, the ambiguity is reduced. Culture wants to be familiar with its organizations, because it can predict future events and situations are clearly interpreted. On the other hand in these cultures risks are taken more easily, for example, war with the other party is started sooner rather than waiting around. Parikka (2007, 45) brings out the fact that Russia has a lot of uncertainty and ambiguity avoidance in its culture, although Russia is well known for the risk taking (for example, Russian roulette and gambling). "We're actually ready for risky behaviour in order to decrease ambiguity. Already familiar risks are acceptable, but new risks create fear of ambiguous situations "(Parikka 2007, 45). Parikka (2007, 46) explains that according to the writer Mikhail Berg typical Russian seriousness and politeness goes back to just the avoidance of doubt; no need to smile to a stranger, because they are unknown. Therefore, this situation is new and should be avoided. Finland is in the middle of the uncertainty extremes; insecurities are both accepted and not accepted. (Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 21)

4.2 Finns

Finland is geographically where East and West meet. Because Finland has been under the power of Sweden and under the authority Russia, Finnish people have become such a nation, as it is now. Finnish culture is characterized by silence. Finns are rather silent and allow others to speak. Courtesy of politeness consists of a passiveness; one will be left alone and one rather listens than talks about himself. In some countries such silence may be taken as ignorance. (Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 71) Mikluha (1996, 23) in turn, points out the Finns are direct in their speeches, due to the Lutheran outlook on life.

Finnish is indeed direct in saying things, if the Finns say no, they mean it. Compliments are not part of the Finnish culture, neither in hearing nor in saying them. Finnish are minimal; the use of sign language communication is fairly low. Finns are quiet, gutsy, responsible, reliable, punctual and conscientious. Finns word can be trusted. (Keinonen 1999, 11-12) In Finnish working life people are happy to work alone and decision-making is also found at lower levels (Salminen & Poutanen 1998, 100).

4.3 Russians

A Russian person is open, straightforward, careless and social. Russians love long conversations. The Russians are not following the formal etiquettes nearly as much as the Finns. They rely on more open contacts. (Vihavainen 2006, 93) Mikluha (1996, 224) writes that even though in Russia direct speech is valued things are often circumvented by. Russia is a country of close contact, and the distance between the human interactions is short and the body language is used a lot to communicate. Introvert people are considered impolite. Russians love good and decent food, toast speeches and gifts. (Venäläinen tapakulttuuri 1999, 4) Russians do not trust those in power, but even keep them as their enemies. Because the power distance is so great in Russia, the laws and rules are applied little. The saying "there are hundreds and hundreds of people wondering about legislation - there are millions of people wondering about the evasion of it", illustrates this point well. (Parikka 2007, 24)

Russian business world is manager based. Everything is done via the director, and often the company's only authority access is in the leadership. For this, relations with the directors must be handled well. Personal initiative is not valued, as in Finland. A Russian workplace also takes high responsibility for the employees and their family. It is not at all surprising that together with the workplace there can be a nursery. Employees' homes may be included in the company's accounting, the balance sheet. As a summary it could be said that the employers want to hold on to their good workforce and provide it with the best possible. This is a competitive advantage. (Haapaniemi et al. 2003, 104-105)

5 HISTORY BETWEEN RUSSIA AND FINLAND

The common history of Finland and Russia has indubitably been long, eventful and colored with various conflicts. As in any political turmoil and war the heat between the two cultures was kept in flame by accusations, fear and prejudices. With such tools also Russia was labeled as the enemy of the small nation of Finland. Things have certainly changed a lot from the times of war, poverty and conflicts, but the feelings and views about any neighbor are always necessary and strong. In the case of Finland and Russia the past negative turns in difficult lifetimes on both sides still have some influence in today's thinking, and this can be seen in different relations and interaction between the countries. In September 2007 the Finnish Minister of Defence Jyri Häkämies said in his speech in Washington: "The three main security challenges for Finland today are Russia, Russia and Russia. And not only for Finland, but for all of us." His remarks were immediately strongly criticized as inappropriate and it was pointed out that his view didn't represent the official position of the Finnish Government. (www.ceri-sciencespo.com) This remark by Jyri Häkämies illustrates how the negative thinking towards Russians can prevail even with those in power, and those who should be able to keep their remark neutral and civil.

Wars are not directly related to the employment of the Russian immigrants, but it is important to know what things Finnish people have been through, and how is the nature of the shared history between the two countries. It is understandable that for these common years many good things have happened, and also a lot of negative things; unfortunately those negative aspects remain longer in people's minds.

5.1 Wars between Finland and Russia

As result of the Finnish war 1808-1809 the region of Finland was joined to Russia as an autonomous area. The idea behind the trend of National Romanticism formed to be the development of Finnish national identity and culture.

The Finland of 1800's was under the Russian power. The conditions, government and economics were developed, but the biggest changes happened in the turmoil of

Krim's war (1853-1856) when the livelihood liberated and the industrialization began. During this war the Finnish people showed their loyalty towards the emperor in many ways. The emperor also tended to reward this loyalty. After a 50 year break the Riksdag of the Estates was invited to gather again, and they were made a regular reunion. Finland got its own currency - the Mark.

The national movements became stronger and the Finnish movement arising in Finland was also visible in the development of the educational institute and as a strong golden age of arts in the end of the 1800's. The tensioning attitude towards the border regions was evident especially during the so called period of oppression when Finland was being russianised.

After the Turku fire the university was moved to Helsinki, where the status of the Finnish language was pondered in a little university club called Saturday Society.

Second World War

The Second World War began as Hitler attacked Poland in September 1, 1939. In terms of Finland the war began when the red army attacked Finland on November 30, 1939. The Finno-Russo winter war was followed by the Continuation War (1941-1944) when Germany entered the Soviet Union in the June of 1941. In his radio speech Hitler stated that Finland will join the eastern military expedition.

Finland fought internally, integrally and externally with persistence against the over power of the Soviet Union in both wars.

After Finland and the Soviet Union agreed on an armistice in September of 1944, the Lapland war 1944-1945 against the German troops in Lapland began.

A result of the wars, Finland had to concede Karelia and a few other territories to the Soviet Union. The 430,000 Finns who lived in these territories had to flee their homes and resettle in the remaining Finnish territory. Most importantly, however, Finland was not occupied at any point during the Second World War and the country retained its independence despite the territorial concessions. Finland, though severely weakened by war, continued its on-going trade relationship with its longtime neme-

sis, the Soviet Union and it began to benefit from renewed financial stability and a growing market economy.

(*Jatkosota Kroniikka 1991,198*) (Vehviläinen 2002, 46-48, 167-172)(www.yle.fi)

5.2 Civil War traumas affecting present day

World War I aggravated the Russian political issues up to revolutions, during which Finland gained its independency in December 1917. Suspicions and confusing national circumstances triggered the civil war in January 1918. Finland was then divided into two: red left wing socialists and white non-socialists. The war ended in the victory of the white party with the help of Germans in the April-May of 1918. For the war it was characteristic to have political violence and terrorism; this war left behind some hurtful wounds. The new constitution of Finland was accepted in the summer of 1919.

In early 1918, Finland experienced a brief but bitter civil war between “the reds”, a force mostly made up of landless rural and industrial workers, and “the whites”, representing the interests of the bourgeoisie and wealthy peasantry. The war ended in May 1918, once the whites had overcome the reds.

Already during the civil war propaganda of the “whites” focused mainly on Russians. It is always easier to motivate troops to war, with an external enemy. It was also easier to accept the shattering reality of the civil war by pointing the blaming finger to the Russians. At the same time many people blamed only Russians for the war atrocities and acts of blood. As often in the war, also this battle had its psychological mask that defined the sides; the appalling reality of the war camouflaged as good and evil, the East versus West. For a seceded nation a war against a foreign power was easier to handle than a traumatic civil war. Blaming Russians helped “Reds” with their burden. Reds deviation of the class struggle was explained by "Russian infection ", which was spread through the Russian soldiers and the socialist leaders by their propaganda. Russophobia was indeed a common phenomenon in many nations, and so in Finland the Russians were described as a complete opposite from the Finns. Many of the nation's eyes saw Russians as barbaric, animalistic, uncivilized

and dissipated. Reds input was needed for future battles against the Eastern Bloc. This quilt on the Russian side lightened the load on the reds' shoulders.

In the beginning of the 1920s opposing the Russianism was part of the strategic and historic assignment of the country. The place of the Finns was in the frontline of the western civilization instead of the eastern barbarity. For the sake of the future of the battle it was important for the nation to have Russophobia planted into the minds of the people. This became one corner of the culture in the beginning of the 1920s. Genuine and true patriotism was pure only by opposing the Russians. There was no grey area between the black and the white. (Karemaa 1998, 221)

The reason why I want to mention again the 1918 events is that I believe that negative thinking towards the Russians began just this year. Therefore, it is important to understand what happened in Finland after becoming independent. Even before the Second World War, the Finnish attitudes about Russians changed dramatically. To me, this approach seems to still be alive today, which can be seen for example, in the comments of Jyri Häkämies. Russia was and is considered an enemy number one, and although this was not the official position of Finland, this phenomenon can be seen daily in the media and heard on the people's lips. The enemy always attacks from the east, this lessons I already learned during my military service. This does not relate directly to my thesis, but I think these aspects should be mentioned in order to better understand the views that some Finns have about the Russians. Of course not all people, but some, like the former Minister of Defence. I did not want to write about the politics in my study, but when thinking about the political questions and issues lately, such as whether Finland should join the military alliance NATO, it sometimes seems that the history between Russia and Finland is the main reason why some politicians say yes. In my conceptual framework, history is next to the prejudices. These two can be viewed in different ways, but I think prejudices should be connected with the history one way or another. I have met people who say that I have changed their views of the Russians for the better; when I tried to ask what kind of previous experience they had, and what they mean by saying to a better direction, they do not know how to answer such questions.

This is not directly related to the employment of Russians, but the reactions and prejudices that the word "Russian immigrant" creates in the heads of some Finnish

should be understood, and after all the interviewers and wage payers of the work places are only people who have their own perception about the Russians.

6 FINNS PRECONCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS

6.1 The conflict theory, the contact theory and the years of recession

There are two contradicting assumptions about how the number of immigrants affects people's attitudes. So called conflict theory states, that discrimination and opposition against immigrants increase when different groups get in contact with each other, when the minority gets larger and when the majority and minority must compete of the same limited resources, such as jobs, social benefits or attention of the opposite sex. According to the contact theory the prejudices decrease as the contact between the majority and minority increases, and become more versatile, personal and equal in terms of the gaps in status. The positive effects of the contacts are said to lead from the fact, that for instance people get more information about the other group and learn to understand the behavior of its members.

The conflict theory got support also in Finland in the studies made in 1987 and 1993. As it turned out, the sudden increase in the number of foreign people and asylum seekers in the beginning of the 20th century did not happen in the best moment. Finland had lunged into recession and mass unemployment after the peak prosperity on 1980's, and the unemployment had quadrupled from the five percent of 1987 into the 19 percent in 1993.

During the recession the Finnish people rationalized their attitudes even more towards refugees and other foreigners in the name of competition in jobs and social benefits. Based in the conflict theory this was also connected to the prejudices rising from the other aspects in all population groups. The contact theory got support as well: During the recession the foreign people living in Finland were regarded more positively by the people who personally knew such foreigners. (Liebkind 2000, 29)

6.2 Stereotypes

Stereotype is a presumption or generalization of a certain group of people where the assumption is that people in this group are certain type of people, and they are all similar with each others. (Kivikuru & Kunelius 2002, 308) Group members are not seen as individuals, but he is seen as a something predetermined, assuming that he is similar to other. (Hofstede 1993, 302) Stereotypes that are created from some cultures are not real or false. The one who stereotypes people does it according to something that is easy to see in a group of people. An example would be Finnish people being reserved and quiet. The one stereotyping people cannot see inside the culture, and therefore cannot know why something is done in a certain way in any given culture. Finnish people being reserved and quiet can be seen as a result of being Lutherans. But one cannot deny the usefulness of stereotypes. When one is trying to enter into a new culture, it might help the integration process to have some kind of image of the certain culture, and often there is a grain of truth in stereotypes. On the other hand generalization is never good, since people don't act the same exact way in any culture. (Kivikuru & Kunelius 2002, 308-309)

6.3 Negative perceptions Russians face

The following text is writings of a city councilor from Lappeenranta. The text illustrates very well what kind of preconceptions Russians face, and what are of their own doing. This is not the common thinking Finnish people have towards Russians, but shows that there are people, even in power, who speak extremely negatively about Russians. When someone in power thinks this way, and is willing to speak about it in public makes the general perception worse than it actually is.

“I don't think Russians and Finnish people have anything on common. Only war. I can generalize what I've seen and witnessed myself, and heard from other people. Russians are brash, arrogant, and selfish. Finnish people are humble, strong, and long tempered. Russians have no respect towards Finnish people, their country, laws, or rules. They and don't posses any basic rules of behavior. Russian has not changes one bit during the last 70 years. Or at least not for the better.”

”There is history between Finland and Russia which caused Finnish people sorrow and suffering, and then there is present day. The hatred cannot be explained with just the history, even though some people seem to think that way. Even present day Russians arise feelings of hatred amongst Finnish people when they move to Finland to enjoy good Finnish support system, tax-free shopping, and land purchases, also their bad behavior in general, and their driving culture which increase fatal accidents.”

“Russians don’t understand the concept of queuing, they tend to queue-jump. The idea of having a clean bathroom seems to mean nothing to Russians. Russians don’t care for traffic rules, lane lines are invisible to them and they can easily occupy the whole road which just one car. Lanes are changed without caring for others. U-turns are made whenever they please, even if it is dangerous and against the rules. They speed as they please, other times they draggle and waste everyone’s time. Cars are parked wherever they want, in places no-one else would even imagine parking their car. Dangerous situations with Russian drivers happen daily, and in general they drive as they please with no care for others. All of this I have witnessed myself many times. And I’m not the only one. Even police has mentioned about their reckless driving style.”

“Russians are in their infancy, they have not grown at all. Therefore Russians don’t belong in Finland even in present day. The time between war and the present is less than a lifetime, which is not that long at all.” (www.uusisuomi.fi)

6.4 Young people attitudes

The remarks made by Jyri Häkämies and the Lappeenranta city councilor will have an effect in the thinking of younger people. If the general population hears people with power speak negative things about Russians it can, and most likely will, change the general thinking Finnish people have towards Russians. If young people hear the so called “civilized” people speak negatively it can easily affect in their thinking towards Russians.

Finnish young people attitudes for foreigners have changed considerably in the last five years. According to “Nuorisobarometri 2010” survey announced, that the negativity of immigration has increased significantly.

The increase of xenophobia, a fear of foreigners or strangers, is showed when comparing the same questions and answers every five years. Researchers say that fewer young people consider that foreigners have multifaceted Finnish culture and even less people consider that it would be useful that Finland should have more foreigners. Five years ago third of the Finns thought that it would be good if Finland should have more foreigners. According to the study published on 15.10.2010 the number has dropped to thirteen percent. Five years ago, a clear majority of Finnish youth had the opinion that foreigners are diversifying their Finnish culture. According to recent research, only 32 percent of young people consider that way. The questionnaire was interviewed approximately two thousand young people age under thirty. (www.nelsonen.fi)

7 WORK AND EDUCATION

The following is a review of the “Living conditions of Immigrants” research. Unfortunately this research made in 2002 is the latest research made from this topic. This research had 570 participants of which 220 were Russians, 209 were Estonians, 70 Somalis, and 71 Vietnamese immigrants. This research was made mainly in Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, and some information regarding Russians was also gathered from Turku and Tampere. Russians and Estonians were chosen for this research because they are the largest immigrant groups on Finland. Somalis were chosen because they are the largest refugee group. Vietnamese were chosen because they are one of the oldest refugee groups. Research did note the small amount of Somalis and Vietnamese, which makes the comparison between genders somewhat unreliable. When comparing different immigrant groups one has to take into account the very different age and gender structure of these different groups. In this research Russian and Estonian immigrant groups are similar to Finnish employees, but Somalis and Vietnam-

ese groups are very young and mostly men. The Finnish wage earner data is gathered from research made in 2003 about general working conditions.

The most important and interesting results have been picked in the following paragraphs. Topics are: Why Russian immigrants think they have not found a job which would correspond with their education, Why Russian immigrants have to change profession when they move to Finland. Under review are also the Finnish language skills of the four largest immigrant groups. Also the unstable employment relationships, as well as the physically demanding manual labor issues are under review. (Paananen 2005, 84)

In the Finnish job market the qualifications and finished degrees are well appreciated. However the education and its quality by definition do not settle everything. In terms of the market value of the education and work experience of the immigrants it's essential to measure where the education and experience was gained. In the Finnish job market the employers appreciate most the education that has been completed in the Finnish institutions.

From the employees of the four immigrant groups, compared with Estonians, Somalis and Vietnamese, Russians are the best educated, as almost nine of ten have some sort of professional or higher degree. Every third in Finland has such a degree. Only less than one percent of these populations does not have any, not even basic level education. (all the immigrants in Finland)

More than half of the Russian employees in Finland think their employment fits their education. From the viewpoint of the job market position's stability seeking education does not seem to have great significance to Russians, Estonians and Vietnamese, when viewing all the immigrants of working age. For the foreign workers however the education done in the country of residence is more valuable than the education from their home country, when looking from the analogy between education and work viewpoint. When it comes to Russian and Estonian workers this can be seen in that the degree gained in Finland adds to the possibilities of finding work in one's own educational field. 78% of the Russians, who have completed a Finnish qualifica-

tion or university degree, work in their own field, whereas the same number is only 40% in the case of Russians with a degree from another country.

The degrees completed abroad and their value interpretation is the most crucial structural obstacles in the job market for immigrant. When workers employed in a different field than their education was asked a reason for the situation, about one third of the Russians and Estonians stated that the education gained elsewhere is not accepted in Finland, or that no such matching jobs can be found. On the other hand quite many of these people did not even want to have employment in their educational field. Russians also often face difficulties with language. (Table 1)

Table 1. Why education and employment (work) do not meet. 104 Russians were asked.

Elsewhere acquired education is not valid in Finland	19
Employers' prejudices	11
Does not want to work on field they have education from	19
Does not have education	1
Language skills are not sufficient	17
Cannot find work from their field of education	13
High unemployment on own field	8
Other reasons	11

(Paananen 2005, 87)

Hence the Finnish career does not open its doors for the immigrants that easily. Majority of the immigrants working abroad have had to change their profession after arriving to Finland. Two thirds of the Russians (66%) and Estonians (67%) and about half of the Somali (55%) and the Vietnamese (54%) have changed profession when coming to Finland (Table 2). (Paananen 2005, 86-87)

Table 2. Reasons for profession change. (Has been employed before moved to Finland (148 Russians were answered)

Couldn't find work from Finland otherwise	30
Found work from different field in Finland	27
Got the opportunity to study for a new profession	16
Could not find work from their own field, in Finland	12
Did not enjoy the previous occupation	7
Previous profession is not valued/poorly paid in Finland	1
Other reasons	7

(Paananen 2005, 88)

7.1 Language Skills

Less than half (47%) of the Russian employees thinks that they do very well with their Finnish language skills in their jobs. 48% of the Russians think their language skills are quite good and only 3% think they are bad.

Russians get to use their mother tongue in employment more than other immigrant groups. Almost half of the Russians (46%) and every third of the Estonians (32%) regularly use Russian language in their work. The survey questions or answer options do not indicate in which kind of contexts the language is used: whether it is a question of customer work or socializing with peers. The high number of people using their mother tongue in employment however seem to indicate that the immigrants tend to concentrate in certain jobs. This theory is supported by the fact that finding a job through relatives and friends is the most common method of finding employment for the Estonians (31%) and Vietnamese (37%) workers. Every fifth of Russian and Somali employees (18%) have found their job placements via such networks as well.

Employing immigrant entrepreneurs have been noticed to employ only or mainly other immigrants. The beginning of ethnically segmented labor market in Finland can be predicted already from the fact, that in the work place of an immigrant employee there are more likely other immigrants than in average Finnish work places.

Immigrants often work in so called ethnic specific professions, in which the use of their own language is convenient in many ways. These include jobs created from the immigrant services, controlling a certain language and culture and often the tasks needed for the membership of the ethnical group in question – such as interpreter, language teacher or a peer teacher. (Paananen 2005, 89)

8 UNSTABLE FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT

The temporary nature of the jobs amongst Finnish employees relates normally to a young age, beginning of the career, public sector and female sex. Within immigrants the temporary contracts are also more common for the women than men, but it is not as clearly age relevant than for Finnish employees. (Table 3)

Table 3 Periodic workers by age-groups (< 20-years old) %

	Together	20-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-64 years old
Russians	31	27	35	30
Finns	15	27	11	8

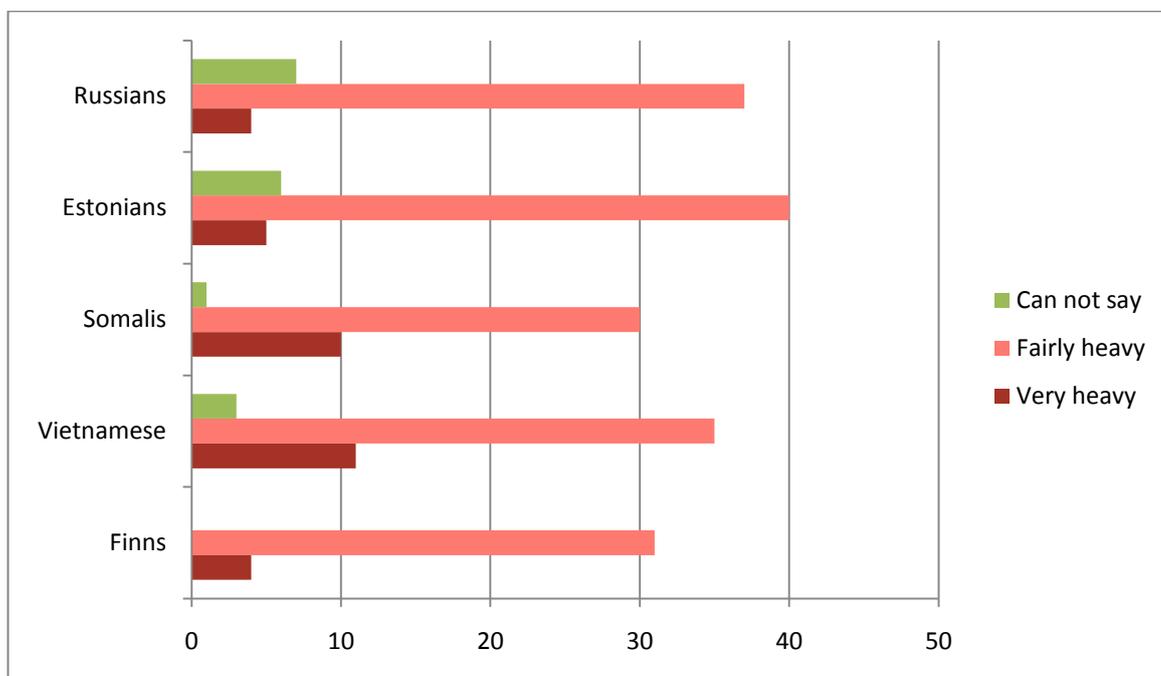
(Paananen 2005, 90)

Within the Finnish employees the share of temporary placements gets smaller as the work experience and time served increases. In terms of immigrant groups the amount of experience does not seem to be the most important factor but the time being employed in Finland. The longer the career in Finland or in one place, the more probable is the permanent working contract. The same applies for work experience and education: Work experience gained in Finnish labor market in Finland is more valuable capital than the experience from abroad. (Paananen 2005, 90-91)

8.1 The distribution of work in the labor market

In Finland there are signs of the formation of immigrant groups' "own" labor markets. Immigrants and ethnic minorities are over represented in some, generally weaker sectors of the labor market. These industries are often marked with structure changes and irregularities in work. In following these "billets of ethnic segmentation" and their appearance in the working conditions of the immigrants are analyzed. In the immigrants' living condition studies these features have normally been evaluated by asking about the physical and mental difficulties, as well as the monotony of the work. (Table 4)

Table 4. The physical difficulty of the job tasks. Tasks either quite or very heavy



(Paananen 2005, 93)

The physical work of the participating immigrants is somewhat heavier than of the Finnish employees. The differences between the immigrant groups are however quite small. (Paananen 2005, 93-94)

9 RESEARCH

The topic of this thesis is “Employment of Russian Immigrant in Finland”, and this is what the research concentrates on. Five Russian immigrants answered the questionnaire. All of them have been, or still are working in Finland. The sample size is very small which means the results might not be very reliable. Because of the small sample size the people chosen for this questionnaire were picked carefully. All five of them have a very different premise when it comes to employment in Finland. Some of the interviewees could speak Finnish very well from the beginning, while some of them barely knew Finnish at all. Some of them had well respected occupations back in Russia, and some of them were just finishing their studies. The reason why the interviewees were chosen carefully was to get a broader sense of all the problems faced by Russian immigrants when they come to work in Finland. One of the objectives was to find out if there is a common problem factor, which is not dependent on the background of the immigrant. Basically the only unifying factor is that they are all Russian immigrants.

To better understand the problems of Russian immigrants, four employers were also interviewed. Their answers are very important, since these are the people who make the decision whether they hire a Russian immigrant or not. They are also people who either recommend, or don't recommend Russians to their future employers. It is important to find how employers feel about Russian immigrants as part of the workforce. In addition to these interviews the author will also use his personal experiences to draw a clearer picture of the situation. This research is also supported by a research made by “Tilastokeskus” in 2002-2003 about the living conditions of immigrants in Finland.

9.1 Background of the research

Research method in this thesis was personal interview with support from pre-scripted questionnaire.

The questionnaire was sent to interviewees via e-mail. The reason for this was to give them a chance to familiarize themselves with the questions before the personal

interview. There were two questionnaires altogether, one for Russian immigrants, and one for employers. Both questionnaires consisted of 18 questions, divided in two parts. The one for immigrants consisted of two parts; first one concentrated the difficulties of finding a job, and the second part on problems faced by Russian immigrants in a workplace. (Appendix 1 & 2) Questionnaire sent to employees was also divided to two parts. The first part concentrated on job interview, and on criteria which the employee chooses to put emphasis on when hiring. The second part focused on the employers view about how well the Russian immigrants perform in working life. The goal of these two interviews is to find out common problem areas which affect the Russian immigrants in working life.

9.2 Types of data

There are two types of data: qualitative and quantitative research.

Quantitative Data

- Based on meanings derived from numbers
- Collection results in numerical and standardised data
- Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics

Quantitative research is used to measure how many people feel, think or act in a particular way. These surveys tend to include large samples - anything from 50 to any number of interviews. Structured questionnaires are usually used incorporating mainly closed questions - questions with set responses.

(<http://www.marketresearchworld.net>)

Qualitative Data

- Based on expressing through words
- Collection results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories
- Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation

Qualitative research seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social context of particular populations. (Aliaga and Gunderson 2000, 143)

9.3 Methodology chosen for this thesis

Qualitative research was chosen for this thesis because out of the two research methods qualitative suits better for this kind of study. Qualitative method is effective in obtaining specific answers about people's values and opinions about a certain topic. In depth personal interview with pre-planned questionnaire was chosen because of the sensitivity of the topic. Some issues discussed were quite personal and having a personal connection with interviewees is important to get the best possible answers. In-depth interview is the best way to gain deeper understanding of any given topic.

9.4 Validity and reliability of the research

In the validity and reliability of the research the small amount of interviewees has to be taken into consideration. Even though the interviewees were carefully chosen to represent many kinds of different people, there is still a great chance for erroneous results. Even with different backgrounds, they had quite a few similarities. All of them have lived in Finland for relatively long period of time, and all of them have had, or still have a job in Finland.

The interview didn't have anyone who has been unemployed for a long time, or has gone back to Russia for whatever reason. All of the interviews were done with people living and working in Satakunta. This research and its results might not be relevant in all of Finland.

The participating Russian immigrants have very different backgrounds. A few of them had visited Finland several times before the permanent move to Finland, and could speak Finnish very well already, whereas others moved to Finland with very

little knowledge about Finland at all. While this selection was done on purpose, one has to be aware of it when analyzing the results of this research.

“Statistics Finland” released a study about “The living conditions of Immigrants” in 2005. This study has been used in this research, but it is six years old which is rather old for this kind of publication. The living conditions of Immigrants can change a lot in six years, and therefore this study has been used only as support on this thesis.

10 RESEARCH ANALYSES

The questionnaires were divided into five parts for both Russian immigrants and the Finnish employers, which were: Language, Education, Cultural Differences, Preconceptions and History. There is two parts in this analysis, first part which concentrates on answers given by Russian immigrants, and the second part which concentrates on the answers given by employers. In every part there will be a small summary of all of the answers given. Straight quotes have been used if this is the best way to illustrate the issue. Since the people in interviewees are from different backgrounds, drastic differences in answers will be pointed out clearly.

10.1 Russian Immigrants

The interview was done with five Russian immigrants, all of whom have been or still are working in Finland. This type of interview was quite time consuming, but I believe this to be a better practice than have a lot of people answer to shallow questionnaire. The interviewees were chosen carefully, and the reason is to get a broader sense of all the problems faced by Russian immigrants when they come to work in Finland. One of the objectives was to find out if there is a common problem factor, which is not dependent on the background of the immigrant. Basically the only unifying factor is that they are all Russian immigrants. The youngest interviewee was 29 years old, and the oldest was 61. All of them have lived in Finland for over 10

years, and have been working in Finland rather long, and one of these interviewees is on part-time pension.

In addition to these interviews, this part also has some parts from the controversial book “*Ryssänä Suomessa*” released in 2010 from Latisheva. The topic and contents of this book is controversial. The topic in itself is questionable, as the word “*ryssä*” has a negative tone to it. It is offensive towards Russians, and is often used in blasphemous fashion. This book was chosen because the book speaks about similar issues as this thesis and research does.

Preconceptions / History

All of the interviewees said they felt like preconceptions towards Russian were always negative. This is backed by Eve Kyntäjä, who speaks about the media, and how immigrants are often presented in negative context. Most common preconception was that Russians are lazy, drunks, or criminals. Positive preconceptions were hard to find. All of the interviewees had moved to Finland in the 90’s, and back then preconceptions towards Russians were very negative. One of the interviewees had visited Finland in 1974, and then these issues were even worse. He believed the war between Russia and Finland was a major reason for these preconceptions. Karemaa speaks about “*Russophobia*” which was prevailing in the 1920’s. While this was important at the time for the sake of the battle, there is a chance this partly still affects the way Finnish people see Russians. In 1920’s genuine and true patriotism was important for Finland’s future. In the present day genuine patriotism is not important for the same reasons, but most likely it has not disappeared completely.

All of the interviewees and their family members have had to listen to racist remarks, especially in the beginning. Most of them could not fathom the reason behind the hate. One of the interviewees understood the hatred between old people, but found it hard to understand why his 12 year old son was teased by 10 year olds, only because he was of Russian descent. Latisheva speaks in his book about his daughter who had to eat antidepressants because of constant bullying (Latisheva 2010, 153). This is the reason this thesis speaks also about the attitude young people have towards immigrants, and according to “*Nuorisobarometri 2010*” research their attitudes have got-

ten worse. Latisheva's Finnish friend wondered why he had given a child who had been born in Finland a Russian name. According to the friend the child's name has caused her some problems in her life in the Finnish society. One of the interviewees talked about a job interview which had gone well, and the employer had promised him a job. The interviewee had spoken fluent Finnish and for some reason the employer didn't realize he was Russian. The issue came relevant when they meant to sign the contract of employment and the employer realized he was about to hire a Russian. All of a sudden the employer wanted to think about it, and promised to call him the day after. In the end he didn't get the job, which was most likely due to the fact he was of Russian descent. One of the interviewees who work as a nurse told she uses a Finnish surname in work, because she has had some problems with old people whom have witnessed the horrors of war. According to the interviewees impressions towards Russians has changed for the better in the 21st century. They believe the reasons are increased tourism between Russia and Finland.

According to interviewees there is basically no bullying in work place. One of them told of an incident in which someone told him to "Go back to your home country", from which he only understood the word "home", and he told him the address in which he lives in, and told him he is welcome. At the time he spoke very little Finnish, and his other co-workers explained to him what he had tried to say. He remembers this incident well because of the two extremities. One of his co-workers was racist towards him and wanted to hurt him with his words, while others helped him a lot to settle in to the new country and his new work place as well. According to him Finnish people are mostly very helpful and polite towards him, but sadly there are some people who act very negative towards Russians, and for the most part this small group of people ruins the outlooks Russian immigrants have towards Finnish people.

All of the interviewees mentioned there are basically no major problems between them and their co-workers after they got to know each other's. Getting to know each other's well took surprisingly long, but the reasons for the long relationship building they didn't really know. They speculated what the reasons might be, and issues like Finnish wary disposition, the common preconceptions, or in some cases the lack of mutual language might have been the reasons. Hofstede also mentions that Finland is

more of an "I" country, whereas Russia is "we" country where people have accustomed to do things in groups and share more, which means they also get to know one another faster. One of the interviewees told he was accepted as part of the group with the message; "At least you are not Vietnamese". This incident confirms what Latisheva speaks about that Finnish people do categorize immigrants. According to Latisheva one can be an immigrant in Finland, as long as they are not from "wrong" country. Latisheva believes Vietnamese, Somalis, and Russians are "b-class" citizens, whereas French, Italians, and USA people are better citizens and they are treated differently. (Latisheva 2010, 232) Because of the answers given in interviews I believe this to be true, although I have no theoretical backing for this issue. Throughout history people have categorized other nationalities, and I see no reason why Finnish people would be different in this day and age.

Language

All of the interviewees estimate their Finnish language skill to be good. This is different from the "living conditions of immigrants" research, which claims that 47% of immigrants believe their Finnish language skills to be good. This is most likely because all of the interviewees in this study have stayed in Finland for quite a long time, and they have had more time to study Finnish language than the average immigrant. Two of the interviewees had good language skill already when they moved to Finland, and the rest of them learned Finnish language after they moved. One of the interviewees said his Finnish skill is often complimented, and people tend to think he is from Estonia, which can be interpreted to mean his language skill is rather good, but there is an accent and maybe some grammar mistakes. This particular immigrant works in a respected job where he has to meet customers on a daily basis, which would indicate that it is not obligatory to have fluent Finnish to be able to work in Finland even in jobs where human interaction is needed.

According to interviewees getting a job without good language skills was surprisingly easy. One of them told he had arrived to Finland on Thursday, and the following Monday he was already working with a dictionary to help him adjust. It was a job in which Finnish language was not needed to perform well. There is a slight contradiction though, since employers told they believe some knowledge of Finnish language

is very important, even in jobs where language is not needed to perform. Sometimes being able to speak Russian can be a positive thing, as two of them got a job because of their fluent Russian.

Education

Getting a job without diplomas and job certificates was not difficult at all, if one is happy with any job available. According to interviewees there are a lot of blue collar worker jobs to be had. Getting a job which matches with their education is a lot more difficult though. One interviewee used to be a theater actor in Russia, and had a lot of difficulties to find a job. This person decided to become a nurse, and in the end did get a permanent job in a hospital. Latisheva speaks about the same issue, as according to her study, getting a job which matches the education of the immigrant is very difficult (Latisheva 2010, 89). The “Living conditions of immigrants” research indicates that the main reason for profession change is the fact that immigrants couldn’t find work from Finland otherwise. The same research demonstrates that 66% of Russian immigrants change their profession after arriving to Finland.

One interviewee who was working in the IT-business in Russia told about the difficulty to get a job in her own field. She has some luck, and a few very helpful people to help her in this long and grueling process. This person moved to Finland without any knowledge of Finnish language, and in the beginning worked in a shoe factory in which language skills were not needed. The owner of this firm heard she was an IT-specialist, and decided to send her into a Finnish language course. Later the owner of the shoe factory sent out applications for her, and tried to land her a job in any firm which would match the immigrant’s education. Quite a few practical training spots were open, but no permanent jobs were available. Her current owner didn’t give up, and sent her to a few courses to get some more experience in IT-field. She also told this immigrant how her skills were wasted in her firm, since the job was very simple and easy to do, and his good education acquired in Russia would be wasted. After many courses and a few different incidents this person ended up teaching Russian in local commercial institute. Even though her Finnish was not very good, the students seemed to like her teaching. One of them wanted some personal teaching, and they became friends. After getting to know one another, the student told her relative has a

firm in which there might be a job for her. She got the job, and was now able to use her Russian education.

Cultural differences

Working in Finland has surprised the interviewees in a positive way. All of them mentioned longer holidays, longer breaks during workdays, and labor unions which actually work like they are supposed to. Good working conditions and working clothes provided by employer were also mentioned as positive issues. They told that in Russia/Soviet Union they had only one 30 minute lunch break during a long day. There were no shorter breaks during the day, as we do in Finland. In Russia/Soviet Union Saturday was also a working day often, which meant only one free day in a week. Also short holidays, such as Easter and such were positive surprises.

The way businesses were lead was also a surprise for many. The boss was equal with everyone else, and if something needed to be done it was asked in a polite way, not told in a condescending way which was what often happened in Russia. Haapaniemi speaks about how Russian business world is manager based, and personal initiative is not valued, as it is in Finland. Parikka also speaks about the importance that Russian manager needs to be tough. This is not the case in Finland, as managers and regular workers are seen as equals. Two of them had worked in a small company with not very many workers, and they felt like the whole company was one big family, everyone was equal with each others. This was good for their overall happiness in the firm, but it also motivated them to work hard, since they really didn't want to betray the trust they had been granted. No matter what was ones job description, it was respected without question. Geert Hofstede's research also indicates the power distance between these countries is quite big. Finland has more equality, whereas in Russia the power distance is very strong.

10.2 Employers

To better understand the problems of Russian immigrants, four employers were also interviewed. Their answers are very important, since these are the people who make

the decision whether they hire a Russian immigrant or not. They are also people who either recommend, or don't recommend Russians to their future employers. One of the interviewees is from a large company one from a small company, and two recruiting firms. Recruiting firms were chosen because they recommend people they interview to fill open jobs, and to know how Russians are seen from recruiting professionals point of view is interesting to see. In addition, recruiting firms have broader sense of the whole situation with Russians, since they have operated with many companies which have either hired a Russian, or rejected a Russian worker. The small company was chosen because he was about to hire, and I wanted to find out what are the chances she would hire a Russian, and what kind of preconceptions he has about Russian immigrants. The large company was chosen because it employs immigrants. Through them I could find out what Finnish workers think of their Russian co-workers. With this interview it was also possible to make a small comparison between Finnish workers and Russian workers. Interviewees wanted to stay anonymous, and so did the company in itself. In addition to these interviews the author has used his personal experiences.

One employer mentioned that sometimes there seem to be inconsistencies in their CV's. They might claim to be able to speak Finnish fluently, when in reality they don't speak it at all, or only a little. One worker claimed to have 10 year experience in a field he was trying to find a job from, and later it was discovered that he had none. He blatantly lied in order to get a job.

Preconceptions / History

According to employers there are positive and negative preconceptions towards Russians. Most of the employers thought that the history between Russia and Finland does not affect on their employment. One of them thought that it is possible, but couldn't say for sure. Common impression seems to be that Russians work hard, and are willing to do physically demanding jobs with less pay than Finnish people, who are often unwilling to do these jobs even with better salary. Because of labor unions the difference in pay is not big nowadays, and this was mentioned by both employers and employees. There seems to be a preconception that Russians are willing to work over-time more willingly than their Finnish co-workers. The "Living conditions of

immigrants” research indicates that Russians are a lot more willing to do periodical work than Finnish workers. This would indicate that they are more flexible than their Finnish colleagues. Even though this research does not speak about their willingness to work more overtime than Finnish workers, there is a reason to assume they are also more willing to work overtime. This might be because of the long days they are used to in Russia, or just because Russians seem to be willing to take any job regardless of the work conditions.

Language

When it comes to the importance of Finnish language the employer’s answers and the reality didn’t seem to match. They all answered that having a good Finnish language skills is important to land a job, but after listening to their answers it became clear that it doesn’t really matter how well the employees speak Finnish. The jobs where people were hired with no or very little language skills were obviously in production or in some other job where Finnish language was not needed to do the job properly. One employer told that his best welder is a Russian who doesn’t speak Finnish at all. This illustrates very well that in some jobs the Finnish language skills are almost irrelevant, even though employees argue the opposite.

The large firm’s production manager told that their firm’s employees have to be on a certain level in Finnish language in order to get a job. I have personally worked in this firm and I have often worked as an interpreter because the level of their Finnish language was not good enough to understand the directions given by management. This is once again a perfect illustration about how the company policies and practice don’t seem to match. The language skill needed seems to be a slippery slope, and it can be lowered to the level where communication between line-managers and the worker becomes almost impossible without an interpreter. These workers have been from Estonia who could speak Russia better than Finnish, and therefore I have been working as an interpreter. These workers also told that even though they have some Finnish language skills, there is a distinct language barrier between Finnish co-workers and them. These Estonians are very hard workers, and they have almost no absences which is most likely the reason their poor Finnish is overlooked.

The entrepreneur told that he might consider hiring a Russian in customer service if in addition to solid Finnish he would speak Russian and some English as well. Or if most customers are Russians, the Finnish language wouldn't even matter that much. Sadly in Satakunta there is very little Russian customers, and for Russian immigrant to get a job from customer service he/she needs to have very good Finnish language skills. It might be different close to the Finnish/Russian border, but in here this is the case. The entrepreneur also mentioned that Russians who moved to Finland in the 90's are in very different position compared to those who have lived here only for a few years or so. They know the culture, language, and are most likely adapted well since they still live in here and have not gone back.

Education

Education is very important in jobs where know-how is needed to perform well in the job. For cleaning jobs, and production jobs education is not really needed. Because these jobs are easy to learn, Russians are often the ones who end up doing these jobs, because they are more willing to work jobs that are physically demanding. This becomes clear from the "living conditions of immigrants" research. One of the recruiting firms representative told that about 50 percent of their customers are immigrants who are looking for jobs where education is not needed, as in jobs which are very easy to learn quickly. He also mentioned that when someone manages to get a job, the worker often tries to get the employer to hire his family members as well, and there are cases in which the whole family is working for the same firm.

From the "Living conditions of immigrants" survey it became clear that Finnish employees appreciate an education acquired in Finland more than education acquired somewhere else. This was one of the main reasons why most immigrants change occupation. From the interviews I made only one of the immigrants wanted to keep their job for which the education had been done in Russia, and he had to re-educate herself to be able to do that.

Cultural Differences

According to employees there are very little cultural differences in the workplace. Some of them told that Russians speak freely and say things directly, whereas Finnish people are not as direct in their communication. This had not caused problems though; it was just something that was noticed by the management. Russian are also very quick-tempered if something doesn't work, but this was seen as a positive issue, as possible problems surface very quickly and Russians are very eager to fix the problem. But overall the opinion seemed to be that there are very little cultural differences, and that Russians are very similar as workers and as human beings as are their Finnish co-workers. The rather small cultural difference is also believed to be part of the reason why Russians can find jobs better than Vietnamese or Somalis for example.

One of the interviewees told that one bad experience with a Russian immigrant can have long lasting effects. It can, and most likely will affect on their outlook in the future and it will hinder future Russian immigrant's chances to get a job. In one firm there was a Russian who had problems with alcohol, and because of this one bad experience he didn't want to hire Russian anymore. There seems to be an assumption that if you know one Russian, you know them all. This doesn't apply only on Russians but on all immigrant groups. Some people seem to assume if they know one person from any given immigrant group, they know them all. This is obviously incorrect, and most Russians are very hard workers. Sadly a few bad apples can ruin the whole batch.

11 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall nine people were interviewed for this research. Even though the number is rather small, I'm satisfied in the results. I had 18 questions, and most questions had follow-up questions depending on the answers given. I had a very interesting and lively discussion with nearly all of the interviewees which took approximately an

hour depending on the interviewee. I tried to choose the most important and interesting issues which came up in the interviews for this thesis. Even though anonymity was guaranteed, a few of them wanted me to not tell every single detail since some issues that came up were quite private. Because of the sensitivity of the topic it was quite difficult to get into real discussion with employers, as they were a bit reserved in the beginning. In the beginning most of them said things like “everyone is equal” or “I don’t have anything against Russians” after which I came up with follow up questions to make them open up a bit more. Most people say those things because it’s the “right thing” to say, even if they don’t really think that way. One of the interviewees asked me to shut down my recorded for a while. In the end I believe I got fairly truthful answers to my questions even though it often took some time to get through their reserved attitude.

11.1 Conclusions

This topic was very close to me which I believe made writing this a bit harder. To me some issues are clear, but whoever is reading this thesis might not quite grasp what I’m trying to say or prove. I believe to have approached this thesis as an immigrant rather than as a researcher, which would have been objective and ideal. When I began writing this thesis I had difficulties to stay neutral. But the fact I noticed this made me work harder to stay neutral and objective, and I do believe I was able to do that moderately well. While interviewing employers I noticed it was hard for them to speak freely to me. Maybe this was because of my Russian roots, or they just didn’t want to speak their mind for whatever other reason. I did manage to convince them to speak more freely even though some questions were a bit sensitive. Being a Russian had its advantages while interviewing employees. We seemed to connect well and they seemed to understand what I was trying to ask from them very well. They were also eager to speak and think back of the times when they had just moved to Finland and speak about the problems they faced back then. I spoke about my own difficulties after moving to Finland, after which they were happy to share their thoughts. Quite often we seemed to have similar problems. While most of my thesis speaks about employment of Russian immigrants, I do believe it is extremely important to find out about the negative preconceptions Russians face in Finland. My goal

was not to write about racism, but rather of the problems faced while trying to find a job in Finland. According to interviewees these preconceptions Finnish people have about Russians makes finding a job quite a bit harder.

To conclude both interviews, I might say there seems to be no problems in finding a job since everyone is equal in labor markets. This is what one might think, but if we go under the surface which is what I tried to do with this research, there seems to be several problems. In the interviews it became clear that the Russian immigrants seem to think the biggest problem in finding a job are the preconceptions Finnish people have towards Russians. It is unbelievable that sometimes only having a Russian surname can be the reason between getting a job and not getting it. All of the Russian immigrants moved to Finland in the 90's, and all of them believe preconceptions were even worse back then than what they are now. Unfortunately I was not able to interview anyone who had moved to Finland recently. All of the interviewees were from Satakunta, which also has an impact in the answers. Most likely there are regional differences. If I would have done this research in Helsinki metropolitan area I believe the results to be very different. Unemployment is still the most significant problem faced by immigrants, however according to the statistics, unemployment decreases as the time of residence prolongs. The effects of unemployment are extensive, because unemployed people are more dependent on the support from the society, the spare time environment and the neighbors, when compared to their working peers.

11.2 Recommendations

It is quite difficult to give recommendations about this issue. It is rather easy to find a job if one speaks fluent Finnish in addition to having Russian as mother tongue, and has a respectable education. But even that is not always enough. There is not much one individual can do to change preconceptions. Each and every Russian immigrant should only make sure to not act in ways that makes preconceptions worse than what they already are. This means having good manners, and represents themselves as well as they can. Emphasis should be also put on the importance of Finnish language. If they are planning to stay in Finland for a long time, maybe even the rest of their

lives, it is vital to learn Finnish language well enough to communicate without problems.

There are a lot of negative preconceptions and while it must be annoying for many Russian immigrants having to fight through these preconceptions, they need to keep their cool about it and not let it affect their lives too much.

Even if all immigrants would believe the preconceptions about Russian are negative, it doesn't necessarily affect on getting a job. Interviews with employees indicate that they believe Russians to be hard workers who are not afraid of manual labor. This is one issue that should be remembered when looking for a job. Employees might like them as workers even if general population has some negative preconceptions. Employees might be afraid immigrants generate some extra costs, or that their language skills or craftsmanship is not up to par. This might be because some Russia immigrants have lied about their skills or work experience in their CV's. This kind behavior is not very common, but bad word travels far and wider than good word, and this kind of behavior by a few individuals harms all immigrants.

Another important issue is to build a good social network of friends outside of working life. Immigrants should not be afraid to interact with Finnish people. Finnish friends help them understand the culture to get them adjusted to Finnish society, and it might bring other good things in the future as well. Like one of the interviewees who found a permanent job through a friend he met while teaching Russian to Finnish people. With Finnish friends the learning process of Finnish language is faster. One should not forget the importance of language. Not only is it vital in working life, but it's also hard to learn Finnish customs and culture without knowledge of Finnish language.

Having a good education is obviously important in labor markets. If it is hard to find a job in Finland, one should give serious thought to finding a place to study in Finland after they have learned Finnish well enough to do so. Even if Russians have education acquired in Russia, it might not be respected in Finland. This is sad but often seems to be the case. Therefore sacrificing a few years to get a proper education which is respected in Finnish labor markets is a good idea.

The immigrants own job searching activity is very important as well. They should search for a job, but also at the same time try to build up a social network of friends. It is sad but true that such things like age, skin color, and ethnicity have a significant bearing when trying to find a job. Finland has very good unemployment benefits, which is enough to live by. I have met Russians who wonder why I'm working if I could get almost the same amount from the government without doing anything. This kind of train of thought is one of the reasons why immigrants are often labeled as people who abuse good unemployment benefits.

The longer one has lived in Finland, the better the chances for network building one has. Their own network of people is helping them find a job, as well as help them meet the needs of labor force. Their own skills, knowledge, and experiences are issues which can help them find a job if they can market themselves well enough. To be able to market themselves well they need to be active, they have to have some language skills, and most importantly they need to have some connections and relationships with people. These are issues which are not easily accessible right after immigration though. Active unemployed person is not dependent on employment office, as they can market themselves to a business by themselves if they work hard for it.

Immigrant should not think that finding a job is hard for them and only them. It can be quite difficult for Finnish people as well. Of course the situation is most likely worse for immigrants, but one should remember that it's not a given even for locals that they find a job easily.

12 FINAL WORDS

I managed to find an interesting topic for my thesis. These issues are close to me, being an immigrant myself and partly fighting with same problems as all the other Russian immigrants. It was very challenging to do a research which is so close to me. In this research I wanted to find out the real problems Russian immigrants have, and

find out the views from both parties; the Russian immigrants trying to find a job and the employers who have employed Russian immigrants. There are problems, but it seems to be difficult to speak openly about these issues. It is easy to ignore the problems, and pretend there isn't any, but the reality is very different. It is difficult to determine which of the faced problems is hardest to overcome. Most likely different people see different issues as their biggest problems and hardest issue to overcome. If I had interviewed more employers from different kinds of firms in different fields I would have gotten more answers to maybe solve the problems. But with the interviews I did, I managed to get on a very personal level and the interviews were very fruitful which was my number one priority.

The point of doing this whole thesis was to help Russian immigrants to find jobs. Through several interviews I manage to find the problems faced quite well, and given the small sample size I'm fairly happy with the end result. There is not too much one individual can do to change the way Russian immigrants are perceived but some recommendations were given nevertheless. I don't know how significant this research is and whether these results are able to help Russian immigrants in employment, but at least some of the greatest problems are now mapped out. It is not possible to solve problems with this kind of research, and one of the main purposes of this research was to arouse thoughts and discussion rather than solve the actual problems.

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APPENDIX 1

TYÖNTEKIJÖILLE:

Ikä:

Sukupuoli:

Koulutus Venäjällä / Suomessa:

Kuinka kauan olet asunut suomessa:

Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt Suomessa:

Maahanmuuton syy:

Työn hakeminen:

1. Minkälainen käsitys mielestäsi suomalaisilla on venäläisistä yleensä?
2. Kuinka hyväksi arviot Suomen kielen taitosi?
3. Kuinka kauan kesti sopeutuminen Suomeen?
4. Onko Venäjällä saaduista todistuksista ollut hyötyä?
5. Jouduitko kouluttautumaan uuteen ammattiin?
6. Onko työllistyminen ollut vaikeaa?
7. Uskotko että venäläisyytesi on vaikuttanut työllistymiseesi?
8. Onko työllistyminen helpottunut mitä kauemmin olet asunut Suomessa?
9. Minkälaisia ongelmakohtia näet työn saamisessa?
10. Käytitkö suhteita työn saamisessa?

Työelämässä

11. Vastaako työ koulutustasi?
12. Onko mielestäsi palkkaeroja suomalaisten ja venäläisten työntekijöiden välillä?
13. Oletko tasavertainen työpaikallasi?
14. Minkälaisia haasteita tai ongelmia kohtaat työssäsi Suomessa?
15. Oletko auttanut muita venäläisiä työllistymisessä, kun olet itse työllistynyt?
16. Miten erilaista työnteko on Suomessa verrattuna Venäjään?

17. Minkälaisia ennakkoluuloja työkavereillasi on ollut sinua kohtaan?
18. Mitä työkaverit ajattelevat sinusta nyt?

ESIMIEHILLE / TYÖANTAJILLE:

Haastattelu / Valintaperusteet

1. Minkälainen käsitys teillä on venäläisistä yleensä?
2. Palkkaisitko maahanmuuttajan työhön?
3. Minkäläinen asema venäläisellä maahanmuuttajalla on työhaussa? Onko se sama kuin muilla hakijoilla?
4. Millä perusteella palkkaat venäläisiä maahanmuuttajia työtehtäviin? Mitä otat erityisesti huomioon?
5. Montako prosenttia työntekijöistänne on maahanmuuttajia, entä venäläisiä? (kuinka monta työntekijää)
6. Miten tärkeänä pidät sitä että maahanmuuttaja on asunut Suomessa useamman vuoden?
7. Onko väliä missä maassa koulutus on hankittu?
8. Minkälaisia ennakkoluuloja teillä oli ennen venäläisiä työntekijöitä kohtaan? Minkäläinen kuva teillä on venäläisistä työntekijöistä nyt?
9. Mitä ongelmakohtia näet venäläisten maahanmuuttajien työnhaussa?
10. Minkäläisiä kehittämis/parantamisehdotuksia näkisit venäläisten maahanmuuttajien työnhaussa?

Työelämässä

11. Miten on otettava huomioon venäläiset työntekijät? Oletko huomannut kulttuurieroja?
12. Miten tärkeänä pidät maahanmuuttajan hyvää suomen kielen taitoa?
13. Onko jonkinlaisia eroja venäläisillä maahanmuuttajilla suomalaisten työntekijöiden välillä?
14. Onko työtehtävät sellaiset joita suomalaiset työntekijät eivät suostu tekemään? Esimerkiksi fyysisesti normaalia raskaampia?

15. Minkälaisia kokemuksia teillä on venäläisistä työntekijöistä? Onko työote tai työn laatu erilainen kuin muilla työntekijöillä?
16. Miten muut työntekijät suhtautuvat venäläisiin työntekijöihin? Onko alussa ollut ongelmia?
17. Suositteletko venäläistä työntekijää?
18. Palkkaisitko lisää venäläisiä työntekijöitä?

APPENDIX 2

EMPLOYEES:

Age:

Gender:

Education in Russia / Finland:

How long have you lived in Finland:

How long have you worked in Finland:

Reasons for immigration:

Finding a job:

1. What kind of perception do Finnish people have about Russian in general?
2. How would you rate your Finnish language skills?
3. How long did it take to adjust to Finnish customs and way of living?
4. Did education acquired in Russia help in Finland?
5. Did you get education for your new job in Finland?
6. Was it difficult to find a job in Finland?
7. Do you believe being a Russian had an effect on finding a job?
8. Has the employment become easier the longer you have lived in Finland?
9. What kind of problem areas do you see in finding a job?
10. Did you have connections when you tried to find a job?

Working life

11. Does your job match to education?
12. Is there a difference in pay between Finnish and Russian employees?
13. Are you equal in your workplace?
14. What kind of challenges or problems do you face in your job?
15. Have you helped other Russian to find a job after you got one yourself?
16. How different is it to work in Finland compared to Russia?
17. What kind of preconceptions did your fellow workers have about you, if any?

18. What do your coworkers think of you now?

EMPLOYERS

Interview / Selection criteria

1. What kind of understanding do you have about Russian in general?
2. Would you hire an immigrant?
3. What kind of position do Russian immigrants have in finding a job? Are they equal to others?
4. On what basis do you hire Russian immigrant? What do you take into account in particular?
5. What percentage of your workers are immigrants? And out of those how many Russians?
6. Do you find it important that the immigrant has lived in Finland for at least a few years?
7. Does it matter in which country they have gotten their education?
8. Did you have any preconceptions about Russians? What kind of image do you have about Russian now?
9. What kind of problem areas do you see about Russian immigrants employment?
10. Do you have any improvement proposals in the job search regarding Russian immigrant?

Working life

11. How do you take into account Russian workers? Have you noticed any cultural differences?
12. How important is it for the Russian immigrant to speak Finnish?
13. Is there a difference between Russian and Finnish workers in general?
14. Are Russian workers jobs something which Finnish workers don't want to do? For example physically demanding?

15. What kind of experiences do you have about Russian workers? Is the approach to work or workmanship different compared to Finnish workers?
16. How the other workers react to Russian? Has there been problems in the beginning?
17. Would you recommend Russian workers?
18. Would you hire more Russian immigrants?