Latvian Women in the Finnish Latvian Family Association

Migration Experiences and Association Participation

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Preface

C. Wright Mills (1959) explained that each person's individual work is like one's own individual craft. Personal experiences can shape one's own imaginations, i.e. sociological imagination. He stresses:

> You must learn to use your life experience in your intellectual work: continually to examine and interpret it. In this sense craftsmanship is the center of yourself and you are personally involved in every intellectual product upon which you may work (Mills 1959, 7-1).

I strongly believe in this statement, and therefore try to apply that to my life, whether it is academically, work-related, or even on a personal level. Since I am considered an immigrant in Finland, and my mother was an immigrant in the United States, I feel that Mills' ideas about craftsmanship, and learning to use one's own life experiences in one's intellectual work, is what has guided me in becoming deeply interested in issues of migration. I have come from somewhat of a transnational family, as Deborah Fahy Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela (2002) describe in the book *The Transnational Family*. I too fit their definition of the transnational family, i.e. "families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely 'familyhood', even across national borders" (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 3). My own family network has always crossed borders, from the United States to Finland, and beyond, and we have always managed to stay connected.

This Master's Thesis is about an association that brings together families with Latvian backgrounds, now living in Finland. But *how* did I come across the Finnish-Latvian Family Association, and *why?* Starting with the latter, I have chosen to focus on an immigrant association, partially because the topic of migration itself is of interest to me, but also immigrant experiences, social relations and the organizational side to immigrant communities. I was interested in finding out how many Latvians are in Finland, and if there were any forms of Latvian organizations. The interest came about just from pure curiosity of Latvia, a country that was fairly unknown to me amid the dominant discourses of Estonia and Russia.

How did I find this particular association? In order to find a list of immigrant associations in Finland, I searched a Finnish website called *"Infopankki"* (Infopankki, 2008). There I was able to find a list of nationality associations, and I came across a Latvian Friendship Society called the *Rozentals Society*. After contacting this particular society, I found that it was not relevant to my thesis topic, as most of the members were Finnish citizens. The *Rozentals Society* directed me to a Finnish-Latvian Family Association, and provided the contact information of the main organizers. This is how I began my studies on the Finnish-Latvian Family Association.

The more I became engaged with this association, I realized that my informants had very specific characteristics in common with each other. The women that participated in this study shared common characteristics with one another, one of them being that they were all Latvian women with children. I also found that the majority of these women were married to Finnish men, with the exception of two Latvian women, one married to a Russian man and the other married to a Latvian man. Interestingly, the majority of the participants were involved in intermarriages quite similar to my own history, i.e., my mother's history as an immigrant that had moved away from Finland because of love, and in turn, created a family with a citizen of the new place in which she called home.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Immigrants, in general, face many obstacles when leaving their homeland and entering a new society. Each individual's experiences and stories can affect and play a role in the choices made to create new experiences, and to gain new relationships and ultimately continue to make new stories in one's own biography. This study focuses on members of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association, in Finland, which is comprised of Latvian women and their children living in the greater Helsinki area. Many times the study of women and migration has focused on certain types of socio-economic factors such as relocation because of their spouse's work assignment, along with other types of labor migration, forced migration, or even studies regarding remittances. However, there are women who have made the choice to move, willingly and independently, to a new country to relocate and learn how to live and function in a new society. Some of the women participating in this Master's Thesis have moved to Finland for reasons such as falling in love with a Finnish man while others have originally moved for education, or relocation due to their spouse's career. This study will illustrate these women's experiences that have enhanced their personal needs to embrace or re-embrace their Latvian identities in Finnish society.

Relocation can bring feelings of loss, joy, worries, excitement, and can contribute to an evolving identity, or even to the creation of multiple identities reflecting one's past and one's present life. Integrating in a new society can affect the way one feels about one's own identity and can bring a need for ethnic and cultural revival and connections to one's history and life experiences. This need does not mean that full integration in the new society is impossible; learning the ways of a new society and becoming comfortable can go hand in hand with a continuance of habits and cultural needs that can be a reminder of one's nationality and past experiences such as language, values and traditions.

A personal need for many immigrants is to be able to speak in their native language in their host country. Many times immigrants will move to a host country with a dominant language that is different from their native language. Language may become even more of an issue once children come into the picture. Children can play a role in creating a motive

for immigrants or parents, especially in intermarriages, to seek ways of providing resources for language preservation, at least giving their children the option to connect with that part of their parent's identity with the hopes of the children incorporating, in turn, certain parts of their heritage in their own identity.

Immigrants can keep pieces of their past alive in today's society much more easily than immigrants could even 20 years ago. Today's global society, in general, allows us to connect with other cultures because information is more readily available. Traveling is not something that needs to be planned months or even years in advance, because things such as cheap airlines, cars, and public transport can allow us to move more freely from place to place. Staying in touch is not limited to just the postal service or telephone; instead people can stay connected through the internet with e-mail services, online chat and even calling on the internet with a microphone and web-camera. There is a multitude of ways of staying connected and keeping up with what is happening around the world. Because of today's global networking possibilities, it is easier for immigrants to live, so to say, with one foot in the new society, while having the other foot in their home country.

I will take a deeper look into the stories of Latvian women participating in the Finnish-Latvian Family Association in Finland. I seek to learn more about how these women have responded to the consequences of living in a new society. When using a biographical method it is important to note that narratives or life stories are co-constructions of the researcher and of the participant taking part in the research. Ten women participated through either face-to-face recorded interviews or a questionnaire. Narrative or biographical methods can be used in the social sciences to learn about individual's survival in society, and in the case of immigrants, survival in a *new* society. Conducting interviews in a biographical approach can provide categories of one's life stories and actions in the past, present and thoughts about the future. This framework will allow the narratives to be told, without reading immediate conclusions about each participant's life. It is easy to consider an immigrant woman as someone who struggles in the new society. One can also consider that people, in general, make the choice to migrate because of economic factors.

Rather than coming to assumptions beforehand, a biographical approach will be used to let go of immediate notions of one's life and allow the narrative to tell the story.

The analysis contains a total of four interviews which were conducted in a biographical approach, six questionnaires containing a similar structure as the interviews, one non-participant observation of a Finnish-Latvian Family Association meeting, informal conversations, e-mail correspondence and one expert interview. With the data collected in the questionnaires and interviews, the analysis will entail different biographical aspects with regard to migration experiences and association participation. In addition, a historical overview of Latvia and examples of Latvian emigration will be illustrated. Theories such as multiculturalism, transnationalism of the family, symbolic interactionism, social networking, social capital and studies on organizations and associations will be addressed.

1.1 Multicultural realms and women immigrants today

Today, cities around the world have developed and transformed into multicultural realms, comprising of diverse groups. Phil Wood and Charles Landry (2007, 25) explain that "major cities are now world cities" where places like London, and other parts of the UK, include "virtually every race, nation, culture and religion." In comparison, Finland has remained relatively homogenous; nevertheless parts of Finland, especially Helsinki, Finland's capital, comprises of diverse groups and the foreign population is increasing. In 2005, the permanent foreign population living in Finland was 113,925. By 2008, the permanent foreign population increased to 143,197 (Population Information Centre, 2008). This is not surprising because people are always on the move, but the "scope and scale" is what differs from movement in the past (Wood & Landry 2007, 26).

The reasons for international migration can vary, but many times scholars have focused on economic factors such as labor and remittances (Morrison et al. 2007, 1). Both men and women are participants in the world of international migration and according to Andrew R. Morrison and colleagues (2007, 1), "the current share of women in the world's population of international migrants is close to half." Women take part in international migration for different reasons such as labor, forced migration, relocation because of the spouse,

education, love, or even an independent choice to take a risk and move to a new society alone; studies show that it is becoming more and more common for women to decide to migrate alone (Morrison, et al. 2007, 185).

Because of the growing number of women taking part in international migration, I have chosen to focus on women immigrants, in the greater Helsinki area, as the target group in this Master's Thesis. In this study, I have sought to learn more about women participating in a particular association, focusing on their migration experiences and ways in which they have kept their national identity present in a new society. Certain researchers have stressed the importance for more research on immigrant associations, asking questions such as *why* immigrant associations exist and why they often persist over a long period (Vermeulen 2006, p 13). But before these factors can be taken into account, learning about each individual's history and experiences leading up to the choice to migrate, along with the reasons for joining an association should also be considered.

1.2 Aims and Background

1.2.1 The Immigrant in a new society

Integrating in a new society can affect the way one feels about one's own identity and can bring a need for ethnic and cultural revival which is often connected to one's history and life experiences. This need does not mean that full integration in the new society is impossible; learning the ways of a new society and becoming comfortable can go hand in hand with a continuance of habits and cultural needs that can be a reminder of one's nationality, experiences and culture such as language, values and traditions. Life for an immigrant can be exciting but at the same time scary; there can be a moment where the immigrant feels powerful, but also a time where he or she will feel powerless. Certain cultural needs from the individual's history can come to surface when faced with life in a new society.

Imagine stepping out of your own comfort zone. We all have our own comfort zone which might include inner cultural needs that we might not be aware of because it is something that is so deep that we may not be consciously aware of those needs when we have a

balanced feeling of self. So if we really try to imagine stepping out of our own comfort zones, we have to dig deep to find out what it is that keeps our inner self harmoniously balanced. For the immigrant, that balance can be altered when faced with a new life, a new surrounding, new people, new norms, new symbols, new language, and so forth. The immigrant who willingly makes the choice and effort to step out of that comfort zone and into a new society will feel powerful but can slowly lose that feeling of power when all of these new situations begin to take a role in the daily life. During this struggle to find meaning in life, to find a way to survive, to find comfort, and to learn a new way of living, the immigrant will have a constant reminder of *back home.* A life they once lived, a life they once knew, a life they might want to live again someday, and this can be in the back of the immigrant's mind, especially when he or she is faced with new experiences in a new society; this can also occur when the feeling of safety or power turns to fear or powerlessness.

One way of coping with this need can be through finding out what it is that the immigrant is missing, what are the needs to help find that comfort zone, or a sense of balance, come back without having to actually move back to their homeland? By taking a biographical approach, the researcher can learn about the immigrant's inner life, history, cultural needs and experiences. In the book *Lines of Narrative: Psychosocial Perspectives,* Molly Andrews and her colleagues (2000, 1) explain that "*we* are constructed by stories" and because of this, it is only fair to consider methods that take a deeper look into people's stories within the framework of the social sciences. Taking a look at an individual's past, i.e. his or her history, helps us better understand why the individual is where he or she is today.

Learning about past events in an individual's life can provide insight as to why the individual has made certain life decisions. A sociological analysis of biography focuses on the objective framework of an action and in turn researches how the individual has established him/herself within the framework (Bohler & Hildenbrand 1995, 339). This does not have to only focus on the individual but can focus on a group. This type of framework can also be focused on organizational development, such as an immigrant association. A

biographical approach also is a method where the researcher is aware that "people construct their own story about what is true about themselves," but once that story is written by the researcher, it is somewhat of a co-constructive process (Essers & Czarniawska 1998; Hirschmann 1997, Essers 2009, 164 -165).

A biographical research method is sometimes called life-course research. Heinz and Krüger (2001, 29) explain:

> The life course thus is a major institution of integration and tension between individual and society that provides the social and temporal contexts for biographical planning and stock-taking as well as for ways of adapting to changes in public and private time and space. Hence, personality development becomes both a project and a reflexive product of social demands, individual decision-making and risk-taking, a process which turns the life course into a biographical accomplishment.

Countries around the world are being shaped by individuals with diverse social origins and ethnicity, along with factors like gender and age. Social origin, ethnicity, gender and age must be kept into consideration when researching individuals in society. When studying immigrants, it is also important to keep in mind not only the history of the immigrant's homeland but also the host countries history, asking questions such as: is the host country generally an immigrant receiving country, and what have been the general trends of the country with regards to immigration? For example, Finland began to receive new immigrants during the 1990s and during this time Finland was going through a deep recession (Similä 2000, 7). Learning about a country's history can also help the researcher find reasons for particular attitudes and opinions of the country's citizens regarding migration topics. One way of gaining knowledge about the host countries' citizens' attitudes and opinions is by learning how immigrant groups perceive the host society (Tuori 2009, 155).

These factors are also influenced by social networks, opportunities and institutions (Heinz & Krüger 2001, 29). Many societies are ever changing and evolving and because of ongoing modernization, its inhabitants are going through different life phases because of

these different points mentioned above. By using a biographical research approach, interview and questionnaire interpretation is usually attempts to show "people's search for meaning" along with "their attempt to make sense of their lives and identities" (Wilkinson, 2000, 438).

Telling the stories that these women express could, in turn, provide information that contradicts stereotypical notions of immigrants in a new society. Biographical analysis is a case study form of research, taking a deeper look into the individual's experiences and considers "the individual as the unit of analysis" exploring "how biographical continuity is achieved" (Wilkinson 2000, 439). In Sue Wilkinson's (2000) article on women with breast cancer, it is stated that illness can be considered a "biographical disruption" which can affect the normal structure of everyday life (Wilkinson 2000, 438). Perhaps different life events, even those not as serious as an illness, can be considered as a biographical disruption, even in migration cases.

When an individual migrates to a new country and tries to manage in a new society, the normal structure of everyday life is altered, or disrupted, because one must learn the norms and ways of the host country. By generating more social capital, that is, "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them," there is more possibility for positive effects on society, such as child development (Putnam 2000, 19, 296).

1.3 The Finnish-Latvian Family Association

The Finnish-Latvian Family Association, or just simply "*Laivas*," is an immigrant association developed to enhance the lives of not only the adult members but also their children. Many of the children have a Latvian mother and Finnish father and many times hear both the Latvian and Finnish languages regularly. The three founders decided to name their association Laivas, because the word "boat" is nearly the same in both Finnish and Latvian languages (*laivas* in Latvian, *laiva* in Finnish). This was also a symbolic meaning, representing the connection between Finland and Latvia. One of the members who answered to my questionnaire described:

Latvia and Finland are separated by sea but the boat is an object which can unite us. There existed mixed marriages even in prehistoric times among inhabitants of our region, and there is an evidence of it in our languages, for example loanwords as *laiva-laiva, vica-vitsa, zirnis-herne, pupa-papu, naba-napa,* which are thematical areas such as everyday life, family life, parts of body, food. So we wanted to be a little bit creative and picked the word "Laivas" as our name (Questionnaire Respondent, 2009).

My goal was to take a deeper look into the lives of these Latvian women that share the common characteristic of living in Finland, and are members of the Laivas Association. I found that the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki has played a role in the development of this association and has also taken part in sustaining it. In order to learn more about the Latvian Embassy's cooperation with the Laivas, I conducted an expert interview with a consular at the embassy. During this interview I found that this study was not only going to have importance to the Laivas, solely exploring an association that has never been scientifically studied before, but that it was also going to be important to the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki and the Latvian government. The consular explained that the Latvian government often mentions the disappointment of their citizens moving away and this study, in turn, will provide a glimpse of what Latvian citizens are doing abroad, and learn about how they keep parts of their Latvian identity present in Finnish society.

During the in-depth interviews with Laivas participants, I sought to find out if there are any similarities with their reasons for moving to Finland, from Latvia, with biographical characteristics such as marrying a non-Latvian and the reasons for participating in this particular association. I also created a questionnaire with similar questions from the interviews to gain access to more information from other participants of the Laivas.

1.4 Problem formulation and methodological framework

During the data collection process I have focused on specific questions that I want to answer:

1. Have there been any difficulties in the integration process in Finland for the participants of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association?

2. What factors played a role in the emergence of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association?

3. Why did the members of the association move away from Latvia?

4. How has the Finnish-Latvian Family Association proved useful for its participants?

5. In what ways can the Finnish-Latvian Family Association improve?

This study has relevance for migrations studies in that it will show one of the many cases of immigrant association participation, and what type of factors can play a role in the creation process of an association by looking at the participants' migration experiences and life in a new society. On the individual level, this study will illustrate the different perceptions of Latvian women migrating to another country and reasons for joining an immigrant association. This study also has practical importance for the members of the Finnish Latvian Family Association, in that it will provide insight into ways in which each member can make efforts toward the development and survival of the association. Lastly, this Master's Thesis will provide the Latvian government with knowledge about how some of their citizens are keeping their Latvian identity and heritage present in their lives despite the fact that they are living abroad.

Chapter 2 will discuss the concepts of meaning, knowledge and migration experiences as a framework to research. This chapter will include the theory of symbolic interactionism, transnationalism of the family and provide information about *women, work* and *family,* along with *women immigrants, discrimination* and *the stigma of prostitution*. Chapter 3 will focus on voluntary organizations as a resource. Here I will address social capital along with organizational and associational development. In Chapter 4, the focus will be on research methods that I have chosen to use in this study. The discussion regarding the research

methods used will include accounts of collecting data through interviews and through the use of questionnaires. Chapter 5 will give a short historical overview of Latvia's history, with regards to national identity, and to the role of voluntary organizing as a way of maintaining it. I will also give a brief overview of Latvian emigration, and Latvian migration to Finland. In Chapter 6, I will engage in the analysis process which includes direct quotes from interviews and tables of data collected from both interviews and questions. Lastly, Chapter 8 will conclude the results of the analysis process and include a discussion.

2. Meaning, Knowledge and Migration Experiences

2.1 Introduction

C. Wright Mills (1959) explains "that social science deals with problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within social structures" (Mills 1959, 143). This is a classic tradition, and Mills insisted that if the historical background is ignored, the present cannot be adequately discussed. In order to study "the human variety," one must remember that this "also includes the variety of individual human beings" (Mills1959, 133).

This chapter will discuss the biography, and the idea of learning about one's biography in other ways than just a beginning, middle and an end. In other words, there does not need to be a traditional "linear" sense of one's life history and experiences in regards to having a plot, in a structured manner (Sermijn, et al. 2008 635). Instead, in the context of immigrant lives, it is interesting to learn about their lives with a "post modern notion" which Jasmina Sermijn, Patrick Devlieger, and Gerrit Loots (2008) describe as a means of letting go of the idea of finding "truth" or the "reality" of someone, and instead taking a look at the individual's story as having multiple entries, with "multiple stories" without a beginning or an end, but in a continual process (Sermijn, et al. 2008, 638).

With this framework Sermijn et al. (2008) consider the notion of selfhood with the idea that there is "no single correct point of entry that can lead the researcher to "the truth" about the selfhood of the participant" (ibid., 638). This is interesting in migration research because

this framework focuses on the notion that we are constantly changing and creating ourselves in connection to our words, our experiences. People who migrate are going through certain changes in their lives that people who live in the same place their whole lives may never experience. Therefore, the immigrant is someone who will have multiple entryways to their inner self; they will have not just one form of identity but perhaps multiple, plural identities.

2.2 Layers of knowledge

In her dissertation titled *The Politics of Multicultural Encounters: Feminist Postcolonial Perspectives* Salla Tuori (2009, 72) describes ethnicity as a term that "relates to an idea of common 'culture'." Importantly, this definition of "ethnicity", and it being applied on immigrants, also defines them as being partly "outside" the host society, the knowledge they possess becomes regarded as irrelevant from a perspective that focuses on the majority population.

Useful information can however be gathered by focusing on immigrants' perspectives of the host society. For example, with regard to women from the Philippines living in Finland, Tuori (2009, 155) explains:

> The utterance "migrant women really don't know what happens in this society, they don't know what to expect" can only be made from a majority perspective, and can be said to express certain knowledge. However, one could learn much about racism and sexism in Finland from the presentation by the woman from the Finnish-Philippines Society. As a standpoint –inspired argument, one could claim that women who are defined as being cultural or racial "Others" in Finland can provide important information about Finnish society precisely because of this position[…] one type of knowledge that is seldom *heard.*

This is why information gathered about an immigrant association is interesting on many different levels. Different aspects of an immigrant association can include the type of association, the size, goals, activities, cultural aspects, language, and so on. These include only some of the layers of an association, and many other layers can unfold by gathering

knowledge, experiences, biographies and opinions of the members that represent a specific association. This information will provide a picture of how each individual perceives the world, or the host society around them, or even the city in which they live in. Information gathered from these experiences and opinions can illustrate the society from the perspective of being the "other."

2.3 Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological tradition that I find useful for this Master's Thesis. Herbert Blumer introduced the theory of symbolic interactionism to micro sociology, or interpretive sociology, where meaning develops through social relations (Renckstorf 2004, 17). Theories such as symbolic interactionism can provide guidance to how interaction occurs and understanding the meanings behind the interaction. Symbolic interactionism can also be a tool for understanding how social relationships blossom. But what are *social relationships*? In the book *Symbolic Interactionism and Cultural Studies: the Politics of Interpretation,* Norman K Denzin (1992) explains that social relationships connect individuals, and include "relationships of love, hate, competition, and ensembles of individual and collective action" (Denzin 1992, 28). Social relationships are sustained through interactional practices, which are driven by the individual's goals. According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, linguistic, cultural and moral structures promote inter-subjectivity; these are three examples of structures which play a role in the existence of society and "affect the fate of individuals" (Denzin 1992, 28).

Denzin (1992, 24) states that interactionists are not fond of theories "which ignore the biographies and lived experiences of interacting individuals". The symbolic interactionist believes that *meaning*s, created by humans, come from interaction, interconnecting the self and social interaction (Denzin 1992, 25). Within the theory of symbolic interactionism, society comprises of social acts which are influenced by the members of the society (Denzin 1992, 26). Social acts can be seen as a mediation of communication, which are connected to cultural meanings, i.e., meanings that constitute the "systems of *ideology* and *power* in a particular social order" (Denzin 1992, 1, 27). This can be made possible orally,

printed and electronically; these are different types of communication systems, which are considered symbolic and multiple. Social structures and social relationships are based on meanings, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Inhuman objects can also play a role in inter-subjectivity; human relations and mobilizing those relations will need the guidance of these objects. Resources are needed, not only in sustaining group formation, but enhancing it. The participants in an association enhance what Urry (2000) calls *flow,* which can involve images, information and finances, while the *scapes* are what produce the flow. Scapes are, for example, transportation of people and objects, wire cables and channels used by mobile phones and so on. Technological networks provide the opportunity to create and sustain social networks. It is globalization which can guide people to "participate in global cultural events […] and the reinforcing of certain kinds of local identity, as in the pronounced rediscovery of many ethnic traditions and identities" (Urry 2000, 36). Thus, the participation and mobilization of a small association is guided by globalization, involving scapes and flows. These, in turn can, "criss-cross the regional borders of society" (Urry 2000, 37).

As an example of what plays a role in reconstituting social relations, Urry (2000, 14) explains that objects such as "machines, technologies, objects, texts, images, and physical environments" are considered inhuman objects that can play a role in reconstituting social relations. It is these objects, material objects, which can guide the individual to connect with another. These objects make it possible for the individual to be 'plugged in.' Technological transformations are guiding inter-subjectivity in today's society, where society is not just human anymore, but instead guided by speed, machines, objects, images, and texts, just to name a few. Increased mobility is made possible because of this phenomenon.

2.4 A Need for belonging and search for meaning

There is a process of letting go of certain aspects of one's life in cases where the individual makes the independent decision to move to a new country. When immigrants are not forced to migrate, there is a process of letting go of certain aspects of their lives in their home

country and seeking a sense of belonging in the new country. Vanessa May (2008) in the article "On being a 'Good' Mother: The Moral Presentation of Self in Written Life Stories," explains that based on, for example, ethnicity, individuals have a need "to feel as though they 'belong'" (May 2008, 472). It is also thought that perhaps individuals work out certain dilemmas in their life through storytelling.

How each individual copes with life's changes and tries to find the balance of feeling as though she or he belongs somewhere, i.e., how one has found a sense of home, differs. One reason why humans differ depends on their cultural background, and therefore, culture and a sense of belonging go hand in hand (Therborn 1991, 182). These differences include norms, emotions, desires, identity and so on. Other differences involve our communication, which includes language itself, along with global viewpoints, beliefs, interpretation of the world around us, ways of coping, symbols and so forth (Therborn 1991, 182-183). This, in turn, can guide an individual to meaning. A sense of belonging can help provide meaning in an individual's life. Our biography is an explanation of how we have made meaning in our own lives, and even in lives of others.

A sense of belonging is somewhat of a sense of feeling at home. For immigrants, there is not only one location that they might call home; instead, immigrants might call their homeland 'home' while at the same time they will call their new home in their host country 'home.' Today's global society is allowing people to have a home in more than one place. This does not only consider a house where one lives, but the feeling of home as well. The notion of home does not have to be the place in which you inhabit at the time being but can have emotions and a sense of belonging, safety and comfort. Those feelings that involve belonging, security and comfort are perhaps found by "reconnecting" with the past (Ahmed 1999, 336). This in a sense can be connected with maintaining one's cultural identity by continuing to connect with the past in certain ways.

Those who choose to migrate may not move away because they are unhappy with their homeland, or have lost a sense of being at home. Some people who migrate might do so as a sacrifice for someone else. For example, in cases such as falling in love. It is possible that

an individual who is happy with his or her home could suddenly decide to move away, solely based on a significant other's needs, such as career, along with personal struggles like financial issues. When the migration takes place, a need for feeling 'at home' can possibly come to surface, referring to one's last home, and this is why some individuals going through such a change, can make efforts to reconnect with their past in some form or another.

2.5 Transnationalism and the family

Immigrant families along with mixed marriage families are facing different types of what Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) call "familyhood," and this often involves separation and relationships across borders (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 3). Today, families are influenced by migration in that the relationship with parents, siblings, husbands, wives, children and other relatives are staying connected on a different level. When immigrants move to a new society, many times they are leaving close ones behind, and in order to keep the relationship close and not just a thing of the past, one might use different ways to stay connected rather than face-to-face interaction.

It is thought that for some immigrants living long distances away from their relatives brings a longing to "keep family ties" (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 14). There are certain emotional attachments and needs that need fulfillment when living across borders and this of course can include financial factors such as remittances, but also a "construction and continual revision of one's role and family identity throughout the individual's life cycle" (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 15). Interaction and communication with family across borders has to be done in a different manner than the cases where people live nearby their families and relatives, for example, in the same city. For the immigrant, the interaction has to be made more deliberately.

But what causes the individual to decide to move away from his or her family? There can be instances of forced migration, asylum seekers or refugees. There are also cases of human trafficking and undocumented migration which includes different reasons such as the trafficking of children and women or migration due to economic factors or the reconnection

with family members that have migrated. But reasons for migration are not limited to these examples. People can decide to migrate because of a new career path, such as job relocation for an international company, or governmental jobs that require living abroad for some years such as foreign officers, along with military factors, and so on. Other reasons can include educational goals, or familial factors such as marriage and children. The choice to move as we can see can come from diverse motives, and depends quite a lot on the individual or group's life cycle, which can involve emotional and material needs (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 17).

When individuals or groups migrate, they are creating multiple community identities, which relate to the places where they currently live or have lived and where their families live and have lived. This is in connection to their family networks including those in their residency and past residency, along with their life choices surrounding their "moral institutional identification" (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 19). Not only is there a need for sustaining familial connections but also a need to localize and connect with people face-to-face. This can involve connections with other immigrants or citizens of the host country, and ethnicity can play a role in the individual's life choices. These connections often times will occur due to sharing a common language (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 21).

2.6 Women, immigration and employment

In the book *When Women Come First: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration*, Sheba Mariam George (2005, 19) studied "female-led emigration of nurses from India" to the United States. George (2005, 20) took a sociological approach to the process of economic success among immigrant women. Many times sociologists focus on men that emigrate from their home country with labor motives. It was revealed that many times when gender and migration was studied, researchers focused on women as secondary migrants, since "women have historically followed men in the immigration process" (George 2005, 20).   However, over time it is becoming more common for women to migrate primarily, or make the initial decision to migrate.

When women and migration have been focused on in past sociological research, it is many times regarding working-class migrants, collecting low-wages either undocumented or in family enterprises (George 2005, 21). Sociological literature at times lacks in-depth knowledge about economically stable and successful immigrant women. Heli Hyvönen (2006, 132), in the article "Leaving Home Behind – Career Opportunity or Seeking for a Safer Life?" explains that although women have always been represented in immigration, today "immigrant women have become more empowered…due to their own initiative."

It has been noted that women's employment has grown substantially amongst the European societies in the recent years; this is seen as a "key force in the restructuring of work and employment in Europe" (Rubery et al. 1999, 20). This progression has been influenced by European employment policy, which included equal opportunity and gender equality. Interestingly, examples of the factors that have played a role in this changing pattern are the restructuring of family life, the household and lifestyle. It is predicted that the shaping over a changing Europe will be influenced by gender (Rubery et al. 1999, 34). Within the European Union, researchers explain that there have also been major societal changes regarding women, work and the family (Drew et al. 1998, 20). Drew, Emerek and Mahon (1998, 20) state:

> Within the European Union the traditional nuclear family type, considered as two adults with dependent children and a sole male breadwinner, has declined dramatically. Dual-income and one-parent families, predominantly female, are increasingly common.

Household types can be influenced by social, cultural and demographic changes. Examples of some factors that play a role in these changes comes from the changes in women's working lives and the growing need to be financially independent (Drew et al. 1998, 40-41). Interestingly, Drew et al. (1998, 41) explain that "women's identity and self-fulfillment [is] increasingly sought, and obtained, outside the home in the male domain of the home" and that women's positions in the labor market can be the cause of the "feminization of education."

Another factor that is bringing diversity to the household is the increase in intermarriages. In the article "Intermarriage and Immigrant Integration in Sweden: an Exploratory Analysis," Martin Dribe and Christer Lundh (2008, 331) found that "immigrants married to natives are more likely to be employed, and also to have higher individual and household income." Dribe and Lundh (2008, 349) suggest that the type of marriage an immigrant has affects the process of integration, and if an immigrant is married to a native, faster integration is more likely.

2.7 Discrimination and prejudice

Although Dribe and Lundh (2008) suggest that there is a connection between the type of marriage an immigrant has and the process of integration, other factors can play a role in the integration process as well. Virtually every society has individuals that face certain types of discrimination or prejudices, and can even be associated with stereotypes and stigmas, and these, in turn, can play a role in group formation. It is important to note that this is true for both sides, i.e., the receiver and the giver. Receivers, or those who are discriminated against, sometimes create an organized arena with others sharing the same experiences, and use the organization as an "island in which they can recover from confrontation with the annoying repetition of stereotypes imposed by the receiving country" (Mutwarasibo and Vogel 2006, 202). For example, some immigrant associations' main goal is to "educate" and inform the public about their background, as a way of fighting against and raising the awareness of the country's "one-sided perception in the media" (Mutwarasibo and Vogel 2006, 202). In contrast, those imposing discriminative beliefs can form groups. For example, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is an organized group that is considered a hate group in the United States.

One specific stigma that immigrant women are often associated with is the stigma of prostitution. Today borders can be crossed more and more easily, especially since the rise of the European Union, and the fall of the Soviet Union. This has brought an increase in what Jana Sverdljuk (2009, 137) calls a "trans-national prostitution business." The trans-national prostitution business involves "men buying sex and pimps, traffickers and women from Russia making mostly sporadic and short-term visits […] to sell sex." This is

occurring worldwide through organized crime and human trafficking rings, often involving the trafficking of women and children. Because of this, public attitude and stereotypes about women immigrants have evolved. This at times can be due to the "one-sided perception in the media" that Mutwarasibo and Vogel (2006) described.

For example, through media and public consciousness, Russian women living in areas such as Norway, and other Nordic countries, are becoming more and more associated with prostitution. This association between Russian women and the trans-national prostitution business is creating a "stigma of prostitution". Russian immigrants, including students, women marriage migrants, and professional migrant women are experiencing name calling, or what Sverdljuk calls 'whore-calling,' and other indications of this stigma. Sverdljuk (2009, 150-151) explains:

> Russian women see the 'stigma of prostitution' as an odd, distorted and inadequate image, a manifestation of the 'primitive' and 'tabloid-like' thinking of journalists […] when opposing derogative public attitudes, women actively construct positive self-representations by appealing to the commonly accepted or 'legitimate' understandings of trans-national communication, family/partnership relations and sexuality […] migrant women's self-presentations tend to seek the available channels of recognition through appealing to what is accepted and commonly approved – the personal right to maintain one's own culture and ethnic traditions […] as well as the growing popularity of travelling and the new types of 'nomadic' ways of life […] supporting the 'normality' of heterosexual marriages based on love and structured around childcare and both parents' involvement into paid labour and try to live up to the ideal of gender equality in intimate and sexual relations.

These self-representations are different to the stigmatic presumptions of strangers. That is, non-prostitute Russian migrant women face presumptions that they are women who: have sex with strangers and multiple partners, take sexual initiative and have expertise and exchanges sex for money (Scambler 2007, 1080). Other presumptions include the possibility of having a sexually transmitted disease, such as HIV/AIDS (Scambler 2007, 1080).

There can be many factors that push immigrants to connect with others sharing similar experiences. As it has been mentioned in previous sections of this thesis, immigrants can easily lose the sense of feeling *at home*. Different factors can affect this feeling, from simple tasks such as trying to find products in a grocery store to sensing negative attitudes or experiencing discrimination from the host population. For example, in a study on immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Finnish attitudes, Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2006) explain that "the attitudes of the Finnish host population toward immigrants […] especially Russians, have found to be predominantly negative" (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2006, 296–297). It was found that discrimination can possibly affect the anxiety levels and cause disorders such as depression in immigrants. Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2006) also found that "the more […] the immigrants had different ethnic networks […] and the more they interacted with host networks, the lower was their reported level of depression symptoms" (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2006, 302). The results of this study, however, showed that for some, ethnic support networks improves the psychological well-being, "only when they are not subjected to discrimination" Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2006, 308).

It is important to note Russia is not the only country with organized crime, and is known for human trafficking rings. Often when borders open, negative effects such as criminality also travel across borders. Because of this, other women experience the prostitution stigma as well. Salla Tuori (2009,153) describes that Philippine women in Finland often are thought of as "purchased wives".

3. Voluntary Organizations as a Resource

3.1 Introduction

Immigrants in a new society can face different boundaries with the citizens of the host country. Some countries, especially those that have only recently began to receive larger numbers of immigrants, could create a boundary between the immigrants and the citizens in the immigrant's host society. In some cases immigrants may easily be left out of the idea of the national identity of the host society (Matti Similä 2000, 8). Charles A. Ellwood focused on communication, stressing the importance of taking "communication as a means of creating reality through human interaction" (Loconto & Pruett 2006, 4). Perhaps for some immigrants, language can be a major barrier when attempting to create social relations with the citizens of the host country. If there is a language barrier, and lack of communication, the potential for creating social relationships can decrease.

3.2 Creating social relations and social support

Another factor of creating social relations and social support is trust, or as Francisco Herreros (2004), in his book *Problem of Forming Social Capital: Why Trust?* explains as the "decision to trust" (Herreros 2004, 8). Obligations and reciprocity have huge impact on the decision to trust another individual, or group. In order to create social capital, social networking, resources, obligations, reciprocity and trust are needed and this can be guided through the use of language and communication on different levels. Immigrants living in a society where the dominant language, for example, is different than their native language, may turn to other immigrants for social support, especially with those who share a common language.

In the book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community"* Putnam (2000, 19) describes the concept of social capital as "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them"; this is connected to "the ways in which our lives are made more productive by social ties (Putnam 2000, 19). Social capital includes what Putnam (2000, 20) describes as "a private face and a public face," i.e., individually and collectively. Generally, it has been found that reciprocity is positive for a society, because it entails "mutual obligation and responsibility

for action" (Putnam 2000, 21). This can be a positive effect on the group which in connection with the reciprocity and mutual obligation, but Putnam (2000, 21) explains that it is not always good for those outside the network.

The importance of groups can also be connected to Russell Hardin's (1995) description of *identification.* Hardin (1995, 7) uses this term to describe *commitments,* where each individual has a sense of commitment to various parts of his or her identity. For example, Hardin (1995, 7) takes his own 'quasi-objective' identities, i.e., 'Anglo-Saxon-Celtic-Huguenot-Hillbilly-Texas-American as an example, to describe the importance of identifications/commitments to each identity. Hardin (1995, 7) argues that if we would not have identifications, i.e., commitments, then our identities would not matter. Our identifications, in terms of commitment, are largely connected to self-interest, and it is self-interest that can lead to group identification (Hardin 1995, 47); perhaps this is what leads to the formation of groups such as voluntary associations.

Putnam (2000, 49) divides voluntary associations into three categories which include associations based on community, church, and work. Survey data collected from the late 1970s to the 1990s has shown a decline in church group, labor unions, fraternal organizations and veterans groups, but at the same time, there has been an increase in profession, ethnic, service, hobby, sports, and school fraternities (Putnam 2000, 59).

Interestingly, in the United States, those who are highly educated are more likely to volunteer, give money and even give blood (Putnam 2000, 118). This can be connected to children's welfare, because according to Putnam (2000, 296) the states in the U.S. that scored high on the Social Capital Index, were states that have residents who trust one another, participate in organizations, volunteer, vote and socialize, and these are the states where newborns are healthier, the education dropout rate is less and there is lower crime and suicide rates. In other words, areas where there is a larger amount of social capital are areas that have positive child development. With that being said, Putnam (2000, 297) warns that this does not necessarily mean that social capital is what causes the outcome of positive

child development, or that areas low on social capital cause children to commit crimes, for example.

Once reality is created through human interaction, social relationships can begin to build. These social relationships can blossom and create more interconnecting relationships, or in other words social networks. Social networks and "institutionalized channels of communication" are key factors which play a role in the development and maintenance of a group (Fine & Sandstrom 2005, 250). Groups create "an organizing arena," which promotes an ideological framework. This organized arena includes "identification, boundary maintenance, rituals, emotion management, and the mobilization of resources" (Fine & Sandstrom 2005, ibid.).

It is possible that social support can help immigrants adjust to living in a new country (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola & Reuter 2006, 294). Jasinskaja-Lahti (2006, 294) and colleagues explain:

> Although some ethnic networks, including friends and family, may be available from the early stages of immigration, the presence of people from the host society within the support network might be very limited, especially if the society of settlement is not receptive to immigrants.

One way that can play a role in helping immigrants adjust to living in a new society is by creating a support network comprising of people with similar backgrounds, for example, connecting with those who share a common language. Support can also be attained by connecting with citizens of the host country; however, as mentioned above, it is not always easy to form relationships with citizens of the host society.

3.3 Immigrant associations

In his study on associations in the United States, Rotolo (1999, 201) found that there are different types of associations that have shown increasing or stable membership rates over the course of 15 years. The nationality association was one type of association that Rotolo

listed. Nationality associations are such organizations that bring together people with similar ethnic background. In some cases the members are predominantly immigrants.

In the book *Immigrant Organising Process: Turkish Organisations in Amsterdam and Berlin and Surinamese Organisations in Amsterdam, 1960–2000,* Floris Vermeulen (2006, 13) stresses the need for studies that ask *why* immigrant associations exist and why they often persist over a long period. Vermeulen (2006, 22) defines an immigrant association as:

> A formal non-profit organisation (officially registered), of which at least half of the board members originate from one single immigrant group (first or second generation). Every formal non-profit organisation founded by members of a single immigrant group is included, regardless of the mission statement of the organisation or the ethnic composition of its members. A strong emphasis is given in this definition to the active organisers, mainly because we are of the opinion that they are the ones who build the organising process of the immigrant group. If there are members, it is called an association.

Vermeulen's definition of a non-profit immigrant organization suggests that if at least half of the board members originate from one single immigrant group, then it qualifies as an immigrant organization.

Questions concerning why an immigrant association forms and why they persist over a long period of time are questions in which Vermeulen (2006, 14) sought to answer in her dissertation, and states that "there are no comparative studies that look at the organisations of different immigration groups and in different locations in order to find the more general process at work." This empirical research was an attempt to conduct a comparative approach, by comparing different immigrant organizing processes, in order to find out what the underlying factors are for the *emergence* and existence of immigrant organizations. Vermeulen (2006, 15) describes six key elements that can be used for a description of the immigrant organizing process: the number of formal organizations, the types of organizations, the organizational activities, the organizers (the active members), and the members and the organizational networks (external and internal).

Of course, there can be many different reasons why groups form an organization. In the article "Immigrant Nonprofit Organizations in U.S. Metropolitan Areas" Chi-Kan Richard Hung (2007) suggests two factors that play a role in the formation of an immigrant association: economic survival and maintaining cultural identity. Hung (2007) expresses that "maintaining cultural identity may take form of setting up ethnic language schools to teach […] children, forming nonprofits to promote ethnic art, music, and dance as well as other aspects of the immigrant home culture" (Hung 2007, 709).

3.4 Sustaining relationships through resources

Sustaining relationships can be guided with resources and in this section I will attempt to metaphorically compare this to the spider and its web. Spiders are necessary in this world just as group formations and associations are useful in society. The complexity involved in the process of the spider web can be compared to the complexity of group formations and mobilizations. The spider web itself has "enormous strength" (Spiders and Other Arachnids 2008). Over time, a group of people, coming together for a particular purpose can develop strength as well. It is also known that the weaving of the web takes up much of a spider's resources. Association development can take up resources, which are "necessary to create collective action frames" (Fine & Sandstrom 2005, 252). A spider uses its resources on a daily basis, which is vital for its survival. The silk is recycled by eating it, and new webs are weaved in the morning (Spider 2008). To sustain associational survival, resources must be used regularly to continue important aspects such as recruitment and the maintenance of social networks (Fine & Sandstrom 2005, 253). After the spider web is weaved, the spider can catch its prey, with the help of the Glandula Aciniformes'; i.e. one of the glands in the abdomen which plays a role in capturing prey, just as an association may use resources such as the internet, letters sent out by post, and other ways of connecting with others in order to recruit new members. With time, a web can be created, with the needed resources, and the success of an active spider. This can be metaphorically compared to the process of associational development, sustained by time, action and resources. An active membership also provides success of an association – without activity, the association is inactive – a new web cannot be created without the active spider.

However, the time used by the spider to create its web is fragile and outside factors can cause unsuccessful results, much like an association's development. For example, factors such as weather, violent winds, a sudden rain drop, insecticide sprays, and simple brush of a broom can destroy a spider and its web. Associations must face bureaucratic factors, for example, registering as an official association takes time, and must be approved. If it is disapproved then the association will not exist, officially. Another example would be the lack of funding which can cause an association's ability to function properly and provide a means to reach the associational goals. Emotional factors such as anger and the ending of friendships can destroy an association, with the lack of membership. Time, resources, social bonds and bureaucratic issues can play a role in an association's development and survival. Much like outside factors, along with the health and proper function of the spider plays a role in the development and strength of the web. Time management and organizational skills will either make or break a group's success.

4. Methods

4.1 Challenges when researching immigrants

There can be certain types of challenges that the researcher must be aware of when studying people, in general. However, specific challenges may arise during the interviewing process of immigrants. In the article "Cross Cultural Barriers in Research Interviewing" Roberta G. Sands and her colleagues (2007) explain that "Cultural differences between an interviewer and interviewee challenge interviewers' ability to enter into a meaningful conversation, no less 'collect' valuable 'data'" (Sands et al. 2007, 354). One particular challenge might be misinterpretation of the individual's thoughts due to misunderstanding and language barriers. When interviewing in English, for example, the interviewer might have to communicate with immigrants who speak English as a second language and this, in turn, can bring confusion or miscommunication. Perhaps a way to control this situation is to continue to ask questions to the interviewee if there is any hint of the interviewee's answer.

Another challenge when interviewing immigrants could be that they will not speak openly about any negative thoughts about their host society. When entering a new society, it is common for the immigrant to go through many phases of coping with new experiences, and learning about the norms within that new society. This process can be difficult for some while easier for others depending on how well the individual adapts to new things. It is important to remember that for immigrants, there might be a chance that they do not want to tell about their struggles in the new society and rather would like to be perceived as a strong individual that can handle new experiences. Also, talking about subjects such as the workplace, friends, family, and in-laws might be challenging especially if their views about these topics are negative. It could be challenging to pull out their feelings about other people with the worry that their anonymity will be lifted and those they are speaking about might find out about it; this can make the interviewee think twice about what he or she says and end up telling things more sugar-coated and positive than they really are, just for either a subconscious or conscious effort to protect themselves.

With that being said, the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee may affect the

interviewee's answers because he or she may feel that the interviewer wants to hear a specific type of answer. On the other hand, some immigrants are ready and eager to speak about their experiences in their host society, especially if certain negative experiences have occurred such as discrimination, hate crimes, financial burdens, language barriers, employer discrimination and other issues regarding the government such as the visa application process, residency permits, work permits and so on. One challenge that interviewers must consider is that the interviewee's recollection on experiences such as these listed above could be told in an exaggerated manner in order to get the message out about their struggles.

Cultural barriers can occur when interviewing immigrants as well. Not only are there language barriers to consider, the notion of honesty and exaggeration but other factors that play a role in the success of the interviewing process. Cross-cultural interviews can be challenging in that they can "cross multiple boundaries simultaneously" with cultural attributes such as "age, […] gender, sexual orientation, religion and socioeconomic status" (Sands et al. 2007, 355). If the interviewer can manage to gain an "insider status" it is much easier to gain the trust of the interviewee and it is important for the interviewer to try to avoid posing as an intruder (Sands et al. 2007, 356). On the other hand, being an outsider has positive aspects as well. Therefore, understanding the position of the interviewer and interviewee can help the researcher during the planning, interviewing and analyzing process.

When commencing the interviewing process, it is important to remember that the individual being interviewed may open the researcher's eyes to certain "entryways" while leaving others closed depending on the research topic and the questions presented (Sermijn et al. 2008, 639). During a narrative process in research, it is important to consider that the interviewee most likely will talk about him/herself based on the research context and the research questions and that will impact the "narrative construction." This is a framework where the researcher does not seek to fully present the participant/s "true self" but just a "co-constructed presentation" of the participant/s and that there can be many presentations of one individual (Sermijn et al. 2008, 647).

4.2 A qualitative approach in sociological inquiry

How does one apply a qualitative approach to sociology? In the book *Qualitative Research in Sociology: an Introduction,* Amir Marvasti (2003, 2f.) describes sociology as "a social science that aims to empirically appreciate the complexity of human life" and considers sociology as an analytical and investigative science. Conducting sociological research considers both theory and method interdependent.

Qualitative research "provides detailed description and analysis of the quality, or the substance, of human experience" (Marvasti 2003, 7). In essence, qualitative research is conducted empirically; Marvasti (2003, 8-9) simultaneously stresses empirical research and theory explaining that:

> Research should be based on the stuff of the real world: interactions, interviews, documents, or observations from, and related to, the social world that we all agree is out there […] Qualitative research […] is less about technical requirements and more about theoretical considerations.

As mentioned previously, I chose to observe one of the Laivas meetings, have informal conversations, contact through e-mail and phone, along with in-depth face-to-face interviews with a biographical approach and the use of a questionnaire. Marvasti (2003, 15-16) expresses that "some qualitative sociologists rely on *informants* or respondents with insiders' knowledge about the topic, to conduct their research". This is also what I have done in my research. In order to gain insider information about the Laivas, I conducted interviews with members of this particular association, and a consular at the Latvian Embassy.

4.3 Sampling through snowballing

Finding the sample in a research plan can be difficult and many times sociologists use different sampling techniques in order to find an adequate amount of participants. One way of doing this is called snowball sampling. The snowball sampling technique guides

sociologists and other researchers in finding new potential respondents by beginning with just a few participants. Once a small number of people agree to participate in the research, the sociologist can ask the participants to spread the word, or in other words ask other potential participants to join the study (Stephens et al. 1998, 89). Once more participants join, then they can spread the word about the research to other potential participants; hence, a snowballing effect.

Another way in which researchers use snowball sampling is by finding one individual that fits the research goal, and in turn asks the potential individual to provide contact information of other individuals that would be suitable for the research aim/s. The researcher can contact the person/s and possibly collect more contact information of other potential participants through this process. This can help the researcher find other participants that can provide information useful for the study. This form of snowball sampling can be very useful. Thomas Hamilton Forster and Venkataraman Nilakant (2005, 355) who conducted research in the privatization of the electricity system in Gambia, explained that this form of snowball sampling is useful in that they were "able to gather a lot of useful information from people who" they "had not earlier considered". Secondly, they were able to gain access to these potential participants by using the names of the person that had recommended them.

4.4 Research Approach
4.4.1 A Biographical approach to migration research
In research, a biographical method can be used when the aim is to collect data regarding certain events in an individual's life. Joan Kofodimos (1990, 433-434) defines *biography* as:

> An attempt to portray someone's nature and the events and experiences in that person's life, both to advance an understanding of the subject and to understand phenomena related to the subject's life (e.g., the subject's creative work or significant achievements, the historical events in which the subject participated).

A biographical approach is an appropriate method when studying immigrants, for example. When an immigrant enters a new society, it is interesting to learn about when the individual migrated, how they migrated and what events took place building up to the choice to migrate. It is up to the researcher, focusing on a biographical approach, to try to make sense of the individual's life story, or to at least "advance an understanding of humans in general" by focusing on the individual's life (Kofodimos 1990, 434). This type of approach also focuses on the individual's inner life. A person's inner life has to do with certain needs, image, worries, goals and so on. It is up to the researcher to tap into the individual's inner life to learn more about why that person is where they are today, and what might have caused the person to construct their life story the way they have. Kofodimos considers different aspects of one's inner life as inner forces (Kofodimos 1990, 435). These inner forces can, in turn, provide the researcher with a fruitful source for finding out one's cultural norms.

Immigrants, in general, face many obstacles when leaving their homeland and entering a new society. Each individual's experiences and stories can affect and play a role in the choices made to create new experiences, and to gain new relationships and ultimately continue to make new stories in their own biography. Relocation can bring feelings of loss, joy, worries, excitement, and raise questions of identity. This is why migration topics in research is very interesting and also necessary in today's global society.

4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews and questionnaire

The two main methods that I used in this study comprised of semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. What are semi-structured interviews and why did I choose this form of interview? The semi-structured interview, or what Marvasti (2003) calls in-depth interviews as a method that provides a chance for the interviewer to understand the interviewees "deeper self," i.e., seeing the world from the informants point of view (Marvasti 2003, 21). Rather than conducting the interviews in a completely predetermined, structured way, i.e. with closed ended questions, I chose a semi-structured interviewing method in order to gain deeper insight with the help of open ended questions. Marvasti (2003, 21) explains:

By not limiting respondents to a fixed set of answers, in-depth interviewing has the potential to reveal multiple, and sometimes conflicting, attitudes about a given topic […] in-depth interviewers have the potential to capture the complexity of respondents attitudes by attending to the 'it-depends' explanations.

This is exactly why I chose to interview in an in-depth manner, rather than following a structured process. Rather than asking questions that require a yes or no answer, one can explore the interviewees' thoughts more deeply by asking questions that could provide "it-depends" answers, as Marvasti (2003) mentioned.

Today, Marvasti (2003) expresses, sociologists are going beyond the "give-and-take" method of asking and answering questions; instead, "qualitative researchers are moving beyond technical and procedural matters and into the realm of meaning, interaction, and social context" (Marvasti 2003, 29).

In my interviews, I tried to keep meaning, interaction and social context in mind. This can include the idea that informants can take on many different roles (Marvasti 2003, 29). Their answers can shift from a parent's viewpoint, to an immigrant viewpoint, and so on. This existed in my own interviews, where the informants would express their feelings as a mother, immigrant, participant in an association, as Latvian citizens and so on.

In the article "Analysing Interviews with Migrants in a Cultural Context" Harriet Silius describes the semi-structured interview as a thematic approach. Thematic interviews are guided with "questions on defined themes" without "word-to-word formulations" (Silius 2007, 4). She explains that semi-structured interviews can be conducted in a private, public or virtual environment.

4.4.3 Limitations of the semi-structured interview

One of the strengths within the semi-structured interview is that the interviewee has room to discuss his or her answers and if the interviewer is not sure about the answer, the

interviewee can reword the answer. However, a weakness involved in this method is that the interviewer can ask questions that may signify answers that the interviewer consciously or subconsciously is looking for. One positive side to this type of method is that the interview can be recorded, either voice recorded or videotaped in order to ensure that all of the answers are used accurately in the analysis process. However, it may be difficult for the interviewer to decide which details are significant for the particular analysis process and which details should be left out all together. Open-ended questions allow the interviewees to express themselves freely but may also bring out discussions irrelevant to the research goal/s.

Although the semi-structured interview is thought to have high validity, such as giving the opportunity to speak in depth, there are risks involved where the interviewee may not tell the truth (Gardner 2001, 190). This struggle with honesty is a risk that the interviewee must always keep into consideration when conducting interviews. Reasons for lying include: embarrassment, the attitude that the researcher does not need to know such information sought, a need to conceal particular mechanisms and institutions (Gardner 2001,190). The answers may not be a total lie, but could also be a fuzzy recollection of past experiences. Also, when interviewing people with disabilities or children, it is important to remember that memories can be a bit altered.

It will always be the case that some will remember aspects of a certain experience, while others may have a hard time remembering exactly what happened. Gardner (2001) explains that "memory is a living field" and that "individuals rarely remember, store and recall information and life-events in the form of a text which remains inert and unchanged" (Gardner 2001, 193). In regards to validity, the interviewer must also keep in mind that the interviewee may be stating things that they think the interviewer wants to hear as opposed to the truth of the subject discussed.

Another limitation that researchers can face during the semi-structured interviewing process is the possibility of failure; in other words, the questions asked fail in that they are not inviting enough for in-depth answers, or what Silius (2007, 5) calls "exhaustive answers".

One can attempt to avoid this situation by asking question based on the previous questions, and analyze the answers "as part of the whole interview" (Silius 2007, 6; Charpentier 2006).

4.4.4 Biographical questionnaires

Today, it is becoming more and more common to use a mixed research method. Mixed research combines both qualitative and quantitative ideas during the process of data collection (Johnson, et al. 2007, 114). With that being said, using different methods to collect data might even have an overall qualitative or quantitative approach, but collects data in more than one way. For example, someone who chooses to only use the qualitative approach might use a mixture of methods such as semi-structured interviews, participant or non-participant observation, questionnaires, over the phone interviews, informal conversations and so on. This can bring higher reliability and validity to a given research project.

With this in mind, complementing semi-structured interviews with the use of biographical questionnaires is one example a mixed method approach. Biographical questionnaires can be used to provide useful demographic information about the participants in a research project and allows a means to describe background information in detail. Many of the same questions raised during a face-to-face interview can be asked in a questionnaire and can be a useful way to seek more respondents in a timely fashion. A limitation to using a questionnaire to collect data is the possibility of losing the opportunity to gain richer information about the respondent's history. During a face-to-face interview, it is easier for the researcher to ask other questions that might not have been planned prior to the meeting, but was evoked from in depth, rich and flowing information from the interviewee. This is why using a questionnaire style that allows the informant to write free text can give more details to their memories and biographical information that may have been left out if it were just a yes or no format.

Although the researcher faces the possibility of losing the chance of collecting in depth information with the use of questionnaires, there is also a larger chance that the respondent

tells the truth in a questionnaire. With face-to-face interviews, as mentioned previously, the participant might withhold particular information from the interviewee due to factors such as embarrassment, and so on. By providing questionnaires to participants, especially anonymous questionnaires, there is a higher chance that the answers will be more truthful because there is less of a chance for the respondent to feel embarrassed. The respondent might also spend more time answering the questionnaires, taking time recollect certain memories from the past.

4.5 Accurate data collection and interpretation

Collecting and interpreting data correctly is a struggle for many social scientists. This is the case when humans are the subject of study and the past is trying to be represented. It is impossible to be able to completely relive someone's past experiences and know that it is 100 per cent accurate. With that being said there are ways of trying to collect and interpret data as accurately as possible, in regards to biographical research which deals with memories. Gardner (2001, 196) lists some ways of doing so:

> …obtaining adequate understanding of any of the processes bound up with the articulation and consequences of power in a locale involves affording adequate recognition of the importance of actors' accounts.

This first step involves a mind-frame where the researcher must realize that the individual is the true informant of their own biography. It is therefore important to learn about the individual's past accounts because they have ultimately been a part of creating the experience. However, it is the researcher which conceptualizes the memories where the interviewee helps the researcher to understand a certain social identity (Gardner 2001, 196):

> Respondents' accounts are valid perspectives on the positionality and intentions of their authors and self-witnessed outcomes of their actions. However, they cannot, alone, fully inform any adequate conceptualization of the process bound up with the constitution and reconstitution of social life.

In turn, the individual's knowledge of their past is very useful for the researcher's interest

in finding out about the respondents memories. For example, if a researcher wants to learn about particular experiences that played a role in guiding an individual to the choice of migrating to another country, learning about that individual's past can give meaning to the researcher and provide useful knowledge as to what could have caused them to migrate. Then, in order to gain a broader view of the experience, the researcher can take a look at other actors that might have been involved in the past decisions made and learn about how social networks and institutions can play a role in a person's biography and life choices (Gardner 2001, 197).

4.6 Using Microsoft Word

It is possible to use Microsoft Word during the recording process of the collected data along with the analysis process, where even functions such as coding and retrieval can be done. If the interviewer voice records the interviews, then Microsoft Word is a suitable program to use when the interviewer transcribes the recorded interviews. Some find Microsoft Word as a very useful tool for this process (La Pelle 2004, 86). La Pelle (2004, 86) has used Microsoft Word when analyzing interviews, focus groups, document reviews, and open ended survey questions. This can be done by adding rows, columns, and using the search tools within Microsoft Word. Themes can be added to the rows and columns and edited freely.

La Pelle (2004, 87) suggests seven steps involved with using Microsoft Word for qualitative data analysis:

1. Format the data into data tables including participant ID information and utterance sequence numbers.

2. Develop a theme codebook in tabular format to define linkages between numeric codes and theme categories. Logically organize the codebook based on your framework or report outline.

3. Determine face-sheet data categories on which retrieval will be done and add columns to the data tables to accommodate coding for these.

4. Do the thematic coding in the theme code column, modifying the table as needed to handle text that should be coded with multiple themes.

5. Sort the data by desired face-sheet data and theme code categories to look for

patterns.

6. Validate the coding within a data table, correct, and re-sort.

7. Merge appropriate data tables and validate coding across data tables (optional).

I worked accordingly to this scheme. It was useful to use rows and columns during the analysis process because main questions asked could be added for each theme, and answers from all informants that apply to that specific question could be placed underneath the question. This helped me organize the main categories and subcategories. Each theme could have its own label or code placed in each row which made it easier to access for later use. Another useful option that I found useful was the comment function, where it is possible to add memos or notes.

5. Historical Overview and Latvian Migration

5.1 Introduction

Before continuing into the analysis section of this thesis, I believe that it is important to take a look at the historical background of Latvia, to better understand the Latvian people, and to understand certain factors which have caused Latvians to emigrate over the years. Furthermore, it will be seen that voluntary organizing has been one of the main means both for establishing the Latvian national identity and in preserving it among Latvian immigrant communities.

5.2 Latvian national identity in Latvia

Latvia is a country situated on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, which today comprises of 65,589 square kilometers. Latvia has a long history of ethnic and cultural uniqueness, which echoed throughout history. As early as 1764, when Latvia was still under Baltic German control, Johann Gottfried von Herder guided "modern nationalism in Latvia" (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 1). He participated in peasant traditions such as midsummer, and published Latvian folksongs. Herder initiated the idea of a national identity, during a time that pan-Germanic philosophy was present in Latvian society. However, it was not until the 19th century that marked the time when this uniqueness and ethnic Latvian identity became "the basis for social and state organization" (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 1).

During the 1840s and 1850s, Latvians gained more legal privileges, such as buying land and the ability to move more freely (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 2). This freedom brought rise to a Latvian national awakening. Pabriks and Purs (2002) explain that the ownership of land helped Latvians hold positions in local administration and judiciary, while others became schoolteachers. These changes affected the children's lives, assimilating into the culture with the guidance of education, no longer continuing a life of peasantry. Many that assimilated into a more educated life followed the Baltic German way of living, through education and humanist thought.

While Latvian children were following the footsteps of Baltic Germans, becoming educated and breaking the family history of peasantry, it could have been seen as a disappearance of

Latvian identity. However, a group of 30 Latvian students, enrolled at the University of Dorpat (Tartu), wanted to sustain their Latvian identity. Pabriks and Purs (2002) describe:

> This group consciously identified themselves as Latvian, chose not to assimilate and began the Latvian national awakening. Inspired by the Young Italy and Young Germany movements, they called themselves the Young Latvians (*Jaunlatviesi*) (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 3)

Latvian *language* was rediscovered by these "Young Latvians," along with traditions and folklore (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 3). Over time, as literacy rates increased along with wealth, schooling became an important factor in Latvian society. Along with these changes, Latvian organizations began to emerge; the first was the Latvian Association of Riga which was founded in 1865 (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 4). The Latvian Association of Riga promoted *education* and *culture*, and organized the very first Latvian Song Festival in Riga (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 4).

5.3 New movements and the industrial transformation

The Latvian Association of Riga was seen by some as an association that only took into consideration the merchants and property owners. The other part of the Latvian population was the working class, which were not represented by the Riga Latvian Association (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 6). A new movement called the "New Current" (*Jaunstravnieki*) saw this division between the Latvians and wanted to create a voice for those that did not own land, and factory workers, i.e. the increasing working class. This was all occurring during the same time that the Tsarist authorities began a campaign of Russification, both in the Baltic Provinces and Finland (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 5). Those who were for this campaign had dreams of changing Latvian peasants into Russians. It is important to note that the "Young Latvians" who promoted a national Latvian awakening, made compromises and carried a certain loyalty to the Tsar (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 4). There were Latvians that resented the Young Latvians because of this.

The New Current was a movement that tried to help the Riga Latvian Association become aware of this separation between the landowners and the working class. The goal was to challenge "Riga Latvian Association's right to speak in the name of the nation," (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 6) for the Latvian population as a whole, including both the working class and the landowners and merchants. With both German influence and Russian influence, Latvians struggled to keep a *Latvian identity* present even during times of major changes. Industrialization and modernization began during this same period of time, especially in Riga.

5.4 Latvian emigration and organization

A change in power arose in World War One when Russia was defeated, and Latvia was occupied by the Germans. 1918 marked the "high point" for Germany in the Baltic region, but soon after "was the birth of the Latvian state" (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 14). Latvian nationalists demanded autonomy, and Latvian Bolsheviks took part in a "European-wide-revolution" (Pabriks & Purs 2002, 14).

The Republic of Latvia's independence was declared on November 18th, 1918, and during 1918 to 1940, Latvia became known as The Republic of Latvia. With that being said, Latvia underwent Soviet occupation and between 1941 and 1944 Latvia underwent German occupation (Monden & Smits 2005, 324). Then Latvia remained occupied by the Soviet Union for nearly 50 years. In the article "Latvian-Americans in the Post-Soviet Era: Cultural Factors on Return Migration in Oral History Interviews," Maija Hinkle (2006) explains that in 1944 the Soviet army returned, and approximately 200,000 people, comprising of a tenth of the population, left Latvia (Hinkle 2006, 1).

The areas of relocation include the United States, Sweden, Canada, Australia and other areas. (It is important to note that it was difficult to find references on Latvian refugees and relocation areas). 40,000 of those that left Latvia during the 1940s migrated to the United States. According to Hinkle (2006) the Latvian communities in the United States was "defined mainly by their common heritage and language" (Hinkle 2006, 1). The goals of

Latvian communities were to "remind the world about Latvia's occupation and to preserve Latvia's prewar culture, language and values" (Hinkle 2006, 1).

Over time, Latvians that emigrated have found new settlements, and have built a life abroad. Since the wave of emigration in 1944, the Latvian population, or descendents, has increased. By 1989, over 100,000 Americans "listed their ancestry as Latvian" (Hinkle 2006, p 1; Carpenter 1996, 93). Latvians in the United States felt a need to pass on their Latvian identity to their children and this "energy" gave way to the creation of organizations, institutions, and programs (Hinkle 2006, 5). In 1990, there were more than 500 Latvian organizations in the United States (Hinkle 2006, p 5). Central to the Latvian identity, according to Hinkle, is the Latvian language (Hinkle 2006, 10). Representation of Latvian ethnicity can be found in, for example, ethnic festivals in the United States, "where Latvians often participate […] to sell their traditional foods and demonstrate Latvian folk dances" (Hinkle 2006, 13).

What factors played a role in maintaining a Latvian identity in the United States? Hinkle (2006) did not find any instances with her narrators that discrimination from Americans would have been a factor in maintaining a Latvian identity. Therefore, it was not American attitudes that pushed Latvians to stay involved with their Latvian roots, but rather the opposite. Some of Hinkle's (2006) narrators described demands from the Latvian community to stay involved. Hinkle (2006) found that staying connected to their Latvian community was more of a responsibility but also included positive rewards (Hinkle 2006, 7). For example, it took time for the Latvian community to accept marriage with an American.

Other factors included positive rewards, such as staying connected to a familiar culture along with the opportunity to get involved in Latvian cultural activities. Other positive rewards included even an economic network for Latvians in the United States (Hinkle 2006, 7). Hinkle's (2006) narrators also described "transnational connections, community recognition, sometimes enhanced educational opportunity" and satisfaction from fulfilling ones obligations (Hinkle 2006, 7).

Latvian emigration and organizations was discussed in Chapter 5, and after analyzing my data, some similarities and differences were found when comparing the Laivas and Latvian refugee communities in the 1940s. Firstly, the Laivas applies a similar concept to their association as the Latvian refugee communities of the 1940s. Both groups have transnational connections, and focuses on Latvian cultural activities. Also, a main importance to both of these groups is the Latvian language. With that being said, there are differences between these groups as well. It is important to note that the refugees of the 1940s did not move voluntarily to the United States and other countries and during this time they usually moved in large groups. In contrast, the participants of the Laivas voluntarily moved to Finland, many times independently.

After Latvia's new independence, large numbers of Latvians emigrated to countries closer to home, and migrate voluntarily unlike that of the 1940s when Latvians had to move involuntarily. Latvia regained independence in 1991 and because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Latvia's economic and political makeup began to transform; this transformation, in turn, played a role in new forms of Latvian migration. Throughout 1991 to 2000, 215,000 inhabitants of Latvia emigrated and "according to the Ministry of Economics, about 50,000 people moved to EU countries for work purposes," although this is "not accurately recorded" because it is considered temporary migration (Supule 2007, 201).Particular EU countries receive significant numbers of immigrants on work related terms because they have been open to the free movement of workers since the EU enlargement in 2004 (Supule 2007, 201); these countries include Ireland, (where the most Latvians have migrated to since the new independence), Great Britain and Sweden. Since 1991, the trend has been that "more people leave Latvian than arrive" (Supule 2007, 199).

5.5 Latvians in Finland

Firstly, Finland is a country where research has shown that "immigrants are fundamentally left outside of the idea of a Finnish identity" (Similä 2000, 8). Immigrants living in Finland generally have resided for a short time and there are different small size immigrant groups

that Finland is lacking knowledge of, and the small size groups make it difficult to compare them to immigrant groups in other countries (Similä 2000, 6).

Latvia acceded to the EU in 2004 and interestingly, though Latvia is geographically close to Finland, the Latvian population in Finland remains quite small, compared to other immigrant populations from surrounding countries such as Russia and Estonia. As mentioned in the previous section, Latvians generally tend to migrate to Ireland, Great Britain and Sweden. Great Britain has registered the largest amount of Latvian immigrants since 2002, and within 2009, 2,500 Latvians have registered in Ireland (The Baltic Times, 2009). While there were 686 Latvians living in Finland in 2007 (Statistics Finland 2013a), the number of Estonians in Finland was much higher, comprising of 19,965, the second largest group of foreigner citizens permanently living in Finland after Russians (Finnish Immigration Service, 2007).

In 2008, the number of Latvian citizens *living permanently* in Finland increased from 592 (in 2007), to 674 (Finnish Immigration Service, 2008). That said, a total number of 767 Latvians living in Finland was 767 and increased to 1,235 by 2011 (Statistics Finland, 2013). Finland can be considered an appealing country to those with educational goals, because the higher education system is free of charge for both citizens and foreign students. Other changes can affect migration trends as well. For example, Latvia acceded to the EU in 2004, (although there was a transition period of a few years which continued the need for work and residence permits).

Language could be considered one major factor that has decreased the chances for larger numbers of Latvians not immigrating to Finland. A large number of Latvians are moving to Great Britain, an area where English is the dominant language, whereas Finland's dominant language is Finnish, especially in the Finnish labor market; Though Latvians might have the opportunity to learn Finnish, statistics have shown that English is recognized by many Europeans as the most important international language, and Latvians consider German as the second most important foreign language (Ivashkins & Lismane

2006, 255). This could indicate why more Latvians are moving to Great Britain, rather than Finland, as there is more possibility for them to know English as opposed to Finnish.

As for the reasons why Latvians move to Finland, in 2007 there were 21 Latvians registered at the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki as staying in Finland because of family ties with Finnish citizens. From 2005 to 2007, a total of 51 children were born in Finland where only the mother was Latvian. Interestingly, between these same years, only seven children were born where only the father was Latvian. When children were born between 2005 and 2007 with both parents registered as Latvians, a total of only eight children were born.[1] With these figures, it is clear that most of the children born in Finland, between 2005 and 2007, with some form of Latvian background, came from intermarried families, and have a Latvian mother (see Appendix 1, 88).[2]

According to Santa Pučko, the 3rd Secretary at the Latvian Embassy dealing with consular issues, there have been some changes in Latvian passport regulations. "So that means everyday I have a couple of passports to do," explains Pučko (Pučko 2008). This indicates that there is a continuance of Latvians wanting to move to Finland, even if it is in small numbers. Pučko also mentioned a certain trend that is occurring with Latvian women moving to Finland. Pucko describes that "most of the women are coming here to marry the guy" (Pucko 2008). However, Pucko described the main trend in Latvians moving to Finland in 2007 was for labor. According to Pucko, the Finnish Immigration Service had 68 Latvians in 2007 registered as living in Finland for labor purposes (Pucko2008, interview; Finnish Immigration Service). Labor is not the only trend however in Latvian migration to Finland. "A lot of them are students as well," describes Pucko (Pucko 2008). In 2007, 30 Latvians moved to Finland for a higher education.

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[1] Information collected from the Finnish Population Register, which was provided by the Latvian Embassy. Please see Appendix 1.

[2] This information was gathered as the most recent statistics at the time of data collection for this report.

Latvians also stated another reason for moving to Finland, other than education and labor. Based on the Latvians that have registered at the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki – which is on a completely voluntary basis – Pucko explains that "mostly they are these young women who get married here so they give this great number and are usually somewhere between 25 to 35 years old" (Pucko 2008).

According to the Finnish Immigration Service, there were 21 Latvians that registered in 2007 as living in Finland for the purpose of family ties with Finnish citizens. Please see the table below.

Table 1. Yearly number of Latvian Citizens Registered to stay in Finland for Labor, Higher Education and Family Ties

	2005	2006	2007
Labor	61	49	68
Higher Education	32	26	30
Family Ties	30	14	21
Total	**123**	**89**	**119**

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Interestingly, when comparing the 3 reasons mentioned above, i.e., labor, studies and family ties, the largest group of foreigners, regarding the total foreign population in Finland, registered in 2007 on the basis of family ties (Finnish Immigration Service, 2008). Moreover, according to Statistics Finland's (2013b) database on the citizenship of foreign spouses and cohabiting partners of Finnish men 2006 -2011, there has been a slight increase each year from 2007 to 2011 in terms of the number of Latvian *women* spouses and cohabiting partners of Finnish men. See table below:

Table 2. Latvian spouses and cohabiting partners of Finnish men 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Latvian Citizens	127	138	150	164	176

Source: Statistics Finland

6. Analysis Process

6.1 The initial meeting

My initial meeting with Laivas members took place at the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki, on March 3, 2008. Most of the official Laivas meetings take place at the Latvian Embassy, where space is provided for the participants every second Tuesday of each month. The reasons I chose to attend one of their meetings, was in order to collect information and develop ideas, and simply to get to know some of the active members. During this meeting, I found out the goals of the association and was able to observe what type of activities take place, what type of people participate in these meetings and some basic membership rules.

During the actual meeting that I observed, there were five mothers present, two grandmothers, and seven children. The children seemed to be happy to join each other, laughing, playing and dancing; rather than speaking Latvian to each other, the children tended to speak Finnish with one another. Before the meeting officially commenced, the mothers and grandmothers took time to chat with one another, and it was clear that this social event was important for the adults as well. Once the meeting officially commenced, the only language spoken was Latvian. This particular meeting involved storytelling, singing and craftwork. During the whole meeting, the children were extremely attentive, and interested in the activities.

6.1.1 The Laivas

First, through informal conversations, it was explained that the Laivas was created in 2005, where planning took place during the spring and actual meetings began in the autumn. In order to find out what potential members would want in this association, the founders sent out questionnaires. The goals and motives of this association were for the children to meet and speak Latvian with each other. This is quite a feminine get-together because all of the adult members are women, and most of their children are girls, mainly 3 – 5 years old. These meetings were expressed in a form of "class" activities, and a new class was planned to be launched providing lessons for children to practice writing Latvian. Second, the annual membership fee is 15 Euros, and it was expressed that everyone *must* apply, in order to be a true member of the association. At this time, there were approximately 15 families

in total, who were official members of the Laivas. Third, as mentioned previously, most of the official meetings/classes are held at the Latvian Embassy, however, in addition parties and get-togethers are held at different members' homes. The Laivas also has an annual event, which is in the form of a summer camp (in May 2008, the summer camp was held in Hanko). Interestingly, the summer camp is often funded by the Latvian government.

6.1.2 Background of the participants

As of May 19th, 2009 the Finnish Latvian Family Association still had a total of 15 official "members," one member is one family. Below are tables, which only represent members who have participated in this study.

Table 3. Background of the Participants

Resp.	Age	Year of Relocation to Finland	Reason of Relocation	Husband's Nationality	Resp.'s status of employment
1	38	1999	Love	Finland	Employed
2	32	2001	Love/Job	Finland	Employed
3	33	1993	Love/Education	Finland	Employed
4	45	2001	Husband's career	Latvia	Unemployed
5	35	2007	Husband's career	Russia	Employed
6	38	2001	Love	Finland	Employed
7	34	2000	Love	Finland	Employed
8	38	2007	Family	Finland	Unemployed
9	33	2003	Love	Finland	Employed
10	27	2002	Education/work	Finland	Employed

Source: Grant (2009)

6.2 Data collection process and themes

Firstly, I went to Helsinki for the first time to meet the Laivas participants and observe one of their meetings at the Latvian Embassy. I took notes during and after the meeting, and continued to write my thoughts on the bus ride home. Then I immediately typed out my notes in word document to keep in my files, and began developing questions for my interviews.

When dates and times were agreed on, for my second trip to Helsinki, I prepared my topics of interest for the interviews. I had some questions prepared ahead of time but wanted to keep the interview quite open, to give room for new topics. All of the interviews took place in Helsinki, and were conducted in English. The interviews were conducted, one at a time, and were recorded at various locations; three of the interviewees requested that the interviews take place at their work, and one at a café in a private area. I visited Helsinki three separate times to conduct the interviews, each time traveling there and back by bus.

In the following weeks after the interviews I took time to transcribe my interviews. I listened through them one time, without any breaks or interruptions and the second time I commenced the transcribing process. Already during the transcribing process I was finding themes. After the transcribing process ended, I began reading through my interviews many times, highlighting and abstracting themes that began to surface from the interviews.

The themes which will be illustrated below include, reasons for migration, the family's reaction, career aims in Finland, the relationship with family in Latvia today, the difficulties of seeking a job along with other difficulties that the participants faced living in a new society, Latvian connections (e.g. transnational ties), and prejudices/discriminations in Finland. In the following sections I will also discuss the creation process of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association, participation in the association, opinions of the participants about the association, and struggles within the association.

After all of the interviews were conducted, I decided to create a questionnaire with similar questions asked during the interviews. By sending out the questionnaires to the Laivas e-

mailing list, I gained six more respondents to the research analysis. It is important to note that all but one table includes respondents both from the interviews and the questionnaires. With regard to anonymity, many of the participants in this Master's Thesis requested to stay anonymous, and therefore I will not add any real names in the following sections. It is for the reason of anonymity that I have chosen *not* to label the interview quotations with any indicators such as letters or numbers.

6.3 Limitations

There were particular limitations to the data collection process. Time management constraints were an issue, as Laivas members mostly live in the Helsinki area, and I live in Turku. The other limitation was that that respondents needed to be able to answer my questions in English. Though we did not face any language obstacles, perhaps it could have been easier for the respondents to express themselves in Latvian. Though the distance is not that far, it was difficult to find time that was suitable on both sides, i.e., for the researcher and for the participant. Since we all have busy schedules, our free time was difficult to match and therefore brought complications of collecting data. The questionnaire process was also difficult, in that it was hard to gain a suitable amount of respondents. But thanks to the efforts of the participants and the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki, everything was answered in a timely manner and the interviewing process was always a positive experience. As for future research schedules focusing on collecting data with the use of face-to-face interviews and questionnaires, it is important to give enough time just in case it is difficult to reach the target group.

6.4 Migrating to Finland: "we fell in love"

In order to find out about the participant's backgrounds, and more specifically *why* they moved to Finland, I asked them the simple question of why they moved to Finland. Once the answer was established I wanted to learn more about how they met their husbands. Three of the four participants in the interviews moved to Finland for similar reasons. The other participant moved to Finland with a different motive but made the decision to reside in Finland more permanently because of the same reason as the other three participants. The ultimate reason for moving or staying in Finland was simply because of *love*. Two of

the participants had well paid jobs in Latvia, and therefore did not move to Finland for economic purposes. Although one of the participants had a well paid job in Latvia, she had already made the decision to move abroad, even before meeting her husband:

> *Well few months before, we fell in love and just decided that I could try [to move to Finland]… and actually before I met my husband already I made the decision and had ticket in my pocket that I would move abroad […] and I had very well paid job in Latvia but you know it always seems that out there it's better […] but then I met my husband [in Latvia].*

This participant had met her husband in Latvia, when he was on a business trip. It was seemed important for her to mention that she had a well paid job prior to her migration to Finland, and that it was the fact that she fell in love with her husband that guided her with the decision to move to Finland.

Another participant had met her current husband the first time in Helsinki at a conference, but got to know each other better during another conference held in Latvia. Her reasons for migrating seemed to be both work related and the creation of a new relationship:

> *We met in hydrological conferences in Helsinki and in Uppsala. And then he came to Latvia in year 2000 for a Finnish excursion of Finnish water association. And then I was leading that excursion and then we met more, like get together to know each other better and…that's how that slowly became the idea that I could come to work here [in Finland]. He helped to write the project for Finnish Academy of Science, and some application of funding for exchange researcher in this Institute and then we failed we didn't get the money but I got the job contract for a year. So I came here. So it's kind of both reasons, it was work and my husband.*

Interestingly this interviewee along with the interviewee quoted above both mentioned their careers and wanted to make sure that I understand that their working life was also important to them. Though it is clear that they came here because of love, they also insisted that they

are career oriented and that they did not just move to Finland to be at home, supported by their husbands.

Another participant met her husband in Latvia, and became acquainted with him in a work setting. After they got married, in Latvia, they decided to reside permanently in Finland. However, she explained that she, or in fact, they made the decision for her to continue working in Latvia until she received a job contract in Finland:

> *He was taking care of this regional sales in that area, so he was visiting our sales people there [in Latvia] at our office so, it was during of course that time that he was visiting the office so some connections came* [interviewee laughs] *First we married and after I was looking about 1 year for a job in Finland so I didn't move immediately because we wanted for that I wouldn't come here to stay at home.*

While one of the participants moved to Finland to study, considering it originally to be a temporary move, her decision to stay changed based on the same reasons for the other three participants' decision to reside in Finland. After she graduated, she expressed that her at the time, her (current) husband wanted to continue studying, so she decided to search for a job in Finland to stay near him:

> *It was in 1993. So a long time ago. And yeah I came for 3 years but I met my husband [interviewee laughs] I thought that we wanted to be together and my husband studied so I tried to find a job for me. But it was a time when Latvia wasn't a member of the European Union and I needed to get the visa, a lot of bureaucracy [...] and it was the last years of the recession, and getting a job in that time was not an easy task, and it took time, and I got a job...maybe not my dream job but I got it... and I got all visas, etcetera.*

Ultimately, the decision to reside in Finland seems to be unanimous. Though the participants seem to have found ways of living independently in Finland, from the beginning of their migration, they all based their decision on their emotions, i.e. love. Also,

these women clearly wanted their careers to be connected with their decision to move or to stay in Finland as well. Though love was factor, their careers seem to be very important to them.

6.5 Family's reaction

The interviewee's shared their family's reactions to their decision to move. There were different reactions such as happiness, sadness, and shock. One of the participants, originally in Finland for education, explained that the initial reaction from her family was that they were happy for her, but when they realized that it was going to be a permanent move, their feelings shifted because they did not expect her to stay so long:

> *They were happy but when they understood that I would stay here, they of course wanted me to come back [...]I came together with my current husband (to tell family them in person) [laugh] and they were maybe not so happy about [laugh] my decision and probably because I'm the oldest one and it's the first time the parents have a child that lives abroad.*

Another participant explained that her family was shocked at her decision initially, but over time those feelings of shock have altered. She dropped the news on her mother suddenly without warning, and she expressed a sense of remorse for doing it in this way:

> *I think they were quite in a shock for few weeks but and I mean I made it in the most cruel way. I just called from Helsinki and said that "you know mom I'm getting married on Thursday" [...] but she was quite cool because in a way I lived away from home and far away from home already more than 10 years so she admitted herself that she has got used to this thought.*

Happiness was another reaction from the family of another participant. Her situation in Latvia was expressed as being hard, and her family was happy for her when she found her husband and decided to settle in Finland:

Actually my mother and my family, my father and...they were kind of happy for me because of course I was in a hard situation before the moving […] single woman with a child […]and of course they evaluated my husband of what a nice person he was and they were happy for me because I have met a nice man. Really, my mother was just happy.

Tears, happiness, shock and mixed feelings are reactions that seem only natural for the parents and siblings to go through when one of their family members is moving away to another country. But how does moving away affect their relationships with one another? Does their relationship grow a part? Do they get closer because of the distance?

6.6 Obstacles in a new society

When the individual makes the conscious decision to leave their homeland and migrate to another country, one may deal with a mixture of emotions. Emotions and other thoughts were expressed by the interviewees in this thesis: happiness, excitement, anticipation, caution, sadness and lost and even a feeling that one was forced to move. These are not the only emotions that one may experience when deciding to move away from their homeland. One of the participants felt happy and in love initially, but once the settlement in Finland took place, she explained:

I suddenly was without a job and I suddenly was without my language which was my basic working tool. I suddenly got married I suddenly had a baby and I was away from my country so there were too many things together not to get this krapula hangover.

Another participant had mixed feelings when she made the decision to settle in Finland. Though she moved to Finland because of love, she also felt as if she was forced to move in a way, not necessarily by her husband; instead it was very hard to have a high salary in Latvia. Therefore, she felt it was necessary for her to move to Finland and seek a job with a better salary, as opposed to her current husband moving to Latvia:

I was practically forced to move away because of so low income. Either I needed to change my profession to some business or something, or more profitable job, or I needed to move abroad to get ok salary.

One of the participants expressed caution when she had made the decision to move to Finland. Although she was willing and ready to move to Finland to be with her husband, she expressed the necessity to have a stable job immediately:

First we married [in Latvia] *and after I was looking about 1 year for a job in Finland so I didn't move immediately because we wanted for that I wouldn't come here to stay at home[…]when I moved to Finland I already had a job contract.*

 A description of opinions regarding job seeking in Finland and other issues related to the participants' integration process are illustrated, in table 3. Nearly half of the respondents felt that job seeking has been difficult, while two felt that it has not been difficult, and one of the respondents stated that she is not looking for a job right now because she is at home with her child.   When settling in Finland, one of the respondents of the questionnaire felt that it was difficult when realizing that she cannot count on relatives or friends as much as in Latvia. Another participant expressed a sense of loneliness that occurred when she moved to Finland because of the lack of friends. She also described feeling disappointed that her in-laws do not spend enough time with the grandchildren. Other problems included language barriers, issues with practical matters such as permits and studies before Latvia joined the EU.

Table 4. Job Seeking and Other Difficulties in Finland

Resp.	Opinion on Job Search	Struggles of Living in Finnish society
1	Difficult	She felt lost her first year of relocation because she could not use her native language.
2	Difficult	The first couple years she struggled with loneliness. Her husband was her only friend. Her husband's family did not spend enough time with her children.
3	Not difficult	Felt forced to move because of the low-income in Latvia. Found it difficult to make friends with Finns.
4	Not difficult	It was a shock when she found out she could not depend on relatives or friends and had to depend solely on herself and her husband.
5	Not seeking	Hard, no friends, no information on where to go or what to do. She was not told what her rights are in Finland.
6	Not difficult	She found that Finnish language is important to learn. Took many years to learn and felt pressure from her Finnish colleagues.
7	Not difficult	The beginning was difficult because of the need for a job, study and living permits. It became easier after Latvia joined the European Union.
8	Difficult	Expressed difficulty finding a job because of the language barriers even though she passed the state financed Finnish language courses. She feels that Finns are distant from foreigners.
9	Not difficult	Did not express any problems in living in Finnish society.
10	Difficult	Faced difficulties due to the lack of knowledge of the Finnish language and had a hard time making friends.

Source: Grant (2009)

The participants expressed feelings of loss, loneliness, and difficulties making friends in Finland. Learning Finnish was mentioned two times when discussing difficulties living in a new society. One of the participants expressed the importance learning Finnish, especially in the workplace where she felt pressured by her colleagues to learn Finnish. Respondent number 8 explained that although her Finnish language is efficient, she felt that employers were distant and hesitant to employ her since she is a foreigner.

6.7 Relationship with the family in Latvia today

Interestingly, the relationships between the family and the participants in this study that have made the decision to move away from Latvia to Finland, have either stayed the same

or grown closer. This is something that perhaps occurs because once those who live apart get the opportunity to be together, it is appreciated in a different way than if they lived nearby and were able to spend time on a regular basis. It could also be the life phase in which the participants in this thesis are in. They are all mothers and it could be understood as a time of their lives that family becomes more and more important. Interviewees also explained that they use internet calling systems such as Skype to talk to their families, along with regular landline telephone correspondence. Also, since Latvia is a country that is nearby Finland they are able to visit at least a one or two times a year, sometimes more. One of the participants expressed that the time spent with her family in Latvia, since her move to Finland, contains more of a conscious effort to spend more qualitatively:

> *I think* [the relationship is] *very much closer...because probably that's the human as well that it's not only from mothers side, it's also from my side...when you notice what you are missing, the time that you spend together, you spend more qualitative and you try to do it... so it's definitely because maybe after this first period of how to be careful and how to learn what's happening and how are these days here happening, this integration period what I had... so after that maybe the only thing I really miss here is my family.*

One of the participants explained that in reality her parents, in Latvia, see her more often than some of her parent's neighbors see their own children who live in the same country:

> *The only thing for parents is that of course they want their children to be close enough to their home. But as we noticed now in practice that my mother says that I'm visiting her more often than some of the neighbor's kids living in Latvia visiting their mothers.*

6.8 Continuance of Latvian connections

Many of the participants in this Thesis discussed the different ways of staying connected to Latvia. Firstly, of course it can be seen as natural to keep in touch with family and friends in your homeland when living in another country, but perhaps one thing that has changed

from the time when the first wave of Latvian emigration occurred is the forms of communication which are used today. Staying connected no longer has to be done by writing out letters and calling with a landline telephone. Even in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, the most common and cheapest way for my mother to contact her family in Finland when she migrated to the United States was by writing letters. She was able to call her family in Finland but that was only on special occasions because at the time it was quite expensive to make an overseas call.

Today, we have different ways of connecting with one another because of technological advancements. The participants in this Thesis mentioned the following ways of connecting with their loved ones in Latvia: telephone, email/computer, Skype/computer, face-to-face interaction.

The telephone is not surprising as it is a way that we stay connected even with people in the same country, or even the same city. E-mail is another way of keeping in touch, somewhat like a letter but much faster and perhaps cheaper way of staying connected. Skype, however, has become an interested addition to forms of contact. What is Skype?

> Skype is software that enables the world's conversations. Millions of individuals and businesses use Skype to make free video and voice calls, send instant messages and share files with other Skype users. Everyday, people everywhere also use Skype to make low-cost calls to landlines and mobiles(Skype, 2009).

Skype is another technological advancement in today's global community and can be used inexpensively. Skype allows people to stay connected on regular basis, so long as at least one of the persons involved in this form of communication has internet access and owns a microphone and speakers.

There are others ways that have helped these women stay connected to Latvia. Latvia is one of Finland's Baltic neighbors and as the map indicates, Latvia and Finland are quite near each other. With air travel and cruise lines available, it is possible to visit other countries

quite easily and inexpensively. Many of the participants explained that they visit Latvia at least two times per year, and their family and friends sometimes come to visit them in Finland. One of the participants even stated that she travels to Latvia three to four times per year. Leisure was not the only reason for some of the participants to visit Latvia; three women explained that they work or have worked for Latvia while living in Finland.

Interestingly, the three women who have worked for Latvian while living in Finland are the founders of the Finnish Latvian Family Association. One of the founders explained that she was traveling quite frequently to Latvian working in both Latvia and Finland, and said that this was the ideal situation for her making it possible to have one foot in her homeland and one in Finland. This changed, however, when she had her first child. The two other founders, however, have managed to stay connected to Latvia despite their motherhood. One writes for Latvian magazines, publishes children's books and works for Latvian radio, while the other writes for Latvia.

6.9 Prejudices and Discrimination

Some of the participants in this Thesis told different experiences when the topic of prejudices and discrimination was raised:

> *Yeah I must say I did [*face discrimination*], even in a playground in a baby school. They are small situations like, suspicion about who I am and what am I doing and do I understand everything? And like explaining some rules to me more than to Finnish people.*

When asked if the prejudices have lessened she explained:

> *I do observe and nothing has changed, I do observe. I have changed my attitude, I'm very cool about it.*

For another interviewee, it was difficult for her to speak about some experiences that not only happened to her but to her child:

It's actually was very unpleasant…and it's actually very painful even now to tell about these things because it was about my daughter and she was also involved in these prejudices …So [interviewee sighs] I think in the beginning usually when a Finn sees a white foreigner on the street he thinks you are Russian. Especially if we are former Soviet people, we look different.. We kind of look Soviet. You can notice, I think so. And then they automatically think you are Russian and they even say it and that's of course very unpleasant for us Latvians to be mixed with Russians you know we have that history and occupational things…but it's ok if it applies to me, an adult, I can handle, you know, these things… but of course my daughter faced these in first grade she was going to so- called immigrant school where they are learning Finnish language intensively… and then she was kind of teased and called to be Russian and that she's thinking Russian and she's a shit…a piece of shit. Children! Children at the age of 7? That was a total shock. How can children have it in them, at the age of 7? How can they have this hatred to Russians and white foreigners? Because we are not Russians, certainly…of course children they don't understand that and they don't care and then I realized… I mean…this hatred is in the Finnish people so deep that they pass it over to small children… so I was literally shocked because in Latvia we have a lot of Russians…and we don't hate them so much…we are used to living with them… because they are there… like 37 percent of the population. But here in Finland, that hatred is so deep. Of course intelligent people, they don't have it. In this institute no one ever, you know, has said anything, and they have never mixed Latvians with Russians…

When I asked this same participant about her own experiences with prejudices in Finland, she described that it has been on the streets:

It has been in the streets like… in the very beginning it's just an example. I didn't know how to use a bank ATM and there was a long line of people standing because I was so slow, and then a Finnish man screamed something "Oh you Russian bitch you go home." But that was very beginning here in Finland.. and that was the first time…

I was like shocked.. I was like [interviewee sighs]...and then I realized, because, like I said I came here I didn't know anything. I just came kind of naïve and not thinking anything and then I realized of course... there is this prejudice but it's up to us not to take it seriously because not every Finn thinks or says bad things to you... but when you face it, it's so unpleasant... so that was one actual case and often when I speak my poor English of course Finnish people they hear it that it's not a pure English and they kind of give that look "oh please speak your Russian language and what are you doing here?"

As for those who answered questions in questionnaire form, there were some that had faced certain types of discrimination from Finnish people. In total, three participants (which include one interviewee) explained that they were being judged by Finns and called Russians or "Russian hookers". Out of all 10 participants, six participants faced certain types of prejudices/discriminations while three denied having had such experiences, and one respondent was uncertain about whether her experiences could be called discrimination. This is illustrated in the table below:

Table 5. Participants and Discrimination

Respondents	Discrimination
1	None
2	None
3	When job seeking
4	Uncertain
5	None
6	Finns have called her a Russian with negative undertones. Her child has also been called a 'Russian and that she is shit' by her peers at schools.
7	Experienced bad service at the Finnish Police Station in relation to her driver license and residence permit.
8	Described an underlying "hidden" discrimination from potential employers.
9	Experienced discrimination from other mothers on the playground.
10	Finns have called her a "Russian hooker".

Source: Grant (2009)

Interestingly, the "stigma of prostitution" (described in section 3.2) that many Russian migrant women hold is affecting Latvian migrant women as well. One of the interviewees

explained that perhaps because of her "Soviet looks" strangers will automatically assume that she is Russian.

6.10 The creation process of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association

When asked how the idea of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association came about, one of the founders expressed that loneliness was one of the motivations:

When I was on maternity leave I was a bit lonely. Because before that I was going on business trips and spending weekends at home and we moved to the area we lived and I didn't know people very well, living there because I was all the time coming and going. And on maternity leave I started to think it would be nice to meet some mothers, there were Finnish mothers but I thought that there must be Latvian mothers.

This lead to the curiosity of how she found other Latvian women in Finland, or more specifically, the other two founders of the association:

Information was given by the Latvian Embassy. It was very nice to get to know them I like them very much and they bring different world. Like if I compare, for example one is very artistic person and she knows about culture and the other as well, so it's very nice.

When asked about the objectives of the association, this founder explained:

To have Latvian, to have events where to come regularly and maybe the main objective was to maintain Latvian language and to show children that they are not the only strange ones, that there are another one, and to provide place or events where people can meet others.

When one of the other founders explained why this association was created she described thoughts about intermarriages, children and living in a new society:

I think we were all scared about what language our kids would speak...because everyone knows what's routine and everyone had Finnish husbands and not all husbands are very supportive and maybe no one says it out loud but I think it was just being desperate with a small child in another country and knowing that the result other mothers in the same situation... I think... and also to meet people that we didn't know existed to see that people are dealing with the same problems.

In questionnaire form, the other founder of this association connected the notion of integration as one of the motivations to establish an association:

I founded an organization for Latvian families in Finland called the"Laivas"in order to have more contacts and friends, as well as to promote bilinguality of our kids.

6.11 Association participation

In the table below, the number of children of each participant is listed, along with the way the participants found out about the Laivas. The table also indicates that 9 out of the 10 respondents are active participants in this association.

Table 6. Association Participation

Resp.	Number of children	Way of learning about the association	Active participation
1	1	Latvian Embassy	Yes
2	2	Founder	Yes
3	2	Founder	Yes
4	2	Unknown	Yes
5	1	Internet search	Yes
6	3	Embassy	Yes
7	2	From another association	Yes
8	1	Word of mouth	Yes
9	1	Founder	Yes
10	1	Latvian independence day gala	No

Source: Grant (2009)

Table 6 on the following page indicates the participant's opinions about the Laivas. More specifically, the first column focuses on how each participant benefits by participating in this association, and the second column describes any wishes for changes within the association. Six out of the 10 participants mentioned the importance of the Latvian language. Other important aspects included their children's socialization, along with their own needs in developing friendships. Interestingly, respondent 2 explained that she uses the association has a way to replace her family in Latvia, and this in turn, helps her cope with missing them by being around people with familiar background. With regard to changes within the association, some expressed the need for more help in organizing, and one respondent wishes that there could be more opportunities for just the mothers to meet without the children.

Table 7. Opinions about the Association

Resp.	Benefits of the Association	Opinion about changing the association
1	Latvian Language. Socializing with other Latvians	None. Likes to be active during the meetings but not active in organizing.
2	Latvian Language for self and children. Socializing. Cultural value. A way to replace her family in Latvia since she misses them.	More financial support from the government and more help in organizing by other Participants.
3	Latvian language. Positive for the children. Socializing.	More help from other participants in the organizing process.
4	Benefited from meeting other Latvian families. The child can hear Latvian language, Latvian folklore, and for the child to understand that there are other children that have similar backgrounds.	Would like the opportunity to have meetings with just the adults – "mom's day out".
5	Latvian language. Socializing. Get advice about living in Finnish society	Unsure
6	Personal gain in connecting and developing friendship with others that speak Latvian. Positive for the children.	Likes to be active during the meetings but not active in organizing meetings. Worries that if one of the organizers stops activities, the association will not survive because there is not enough help in organizing
7	Socialize with other Latvians.	A day off from time to time because

		the children get tired.
8	Latvian language. Positive for the children. Socializing with other Latvians.	Unsure
9	Unsure	Unsure
10	Unsure	Unsure

Source: Grant (2009)

Laivas has an annual summer camp. In 2008, the camp was funded by the Latvian government. However, in 2009 they did not receive funding for the summer camp and each participant had to be pay out of their own pockets in order to participate. Interestingly this did not affect the outcome of the summer camp. In fact, there were slightly more participants in 2009 than in 2008.

6.12 Association challenges

When discussing the Laivas, I felt that it was important to learn whether the association was facing any challenges. One of the founders discussed some of the problems that the association is facing:

> *Maybe our main problem is realizing that we can't grow enormously...also there are not many Latvians in Finland and if it's like two times per month there are people who can't get here in a working evening and we have the same problems that other small organizations have like small misunderstandings.*

When I asked about what type of misunderstandings they were, for example if she meant misunderstandings on a structural level or between participants she explained:

> *I think in both but it's very human it's nothing extra-ordinary but we are aware of it and we are solving them and I'm quite positive.*

A sort of division of labor was a problem that this interviewee mentioned as well when discussing challenges within the association:

Maybe some rotation of responsible people should be created which we tried already this year but didn't really work out...but people were tired which was so normal, it's just so normal. People get tired and maybe there should be some steady rotation that others maybe also take responsibilities. As creators of the organization we should learn to give also these responsibilities away.

It is clear that for some it might be difficult to take on more responsibilities within the association. Being involved in the organizational side of the association is something that one of the participant's would rather not do:

Well that's a dilemma that I actually don't want to be too much involved, I want to participate, and that's ok for me there's also time or similar actions, but I don't want to and I don't have ideas on how to make it bigger.. then it needs to be there is some paid teacher or really some with a salary someone who is organizing that would be a next step and that would be a different level but of course there are other people who decide this, it's the leaders of this club...but I really have been thinking that I don't even want to be more involved this is enough.

As of October 2009, particular challenges have arisen. With an over the phone interview with one of the founders of the association, details about the association's problems were unveiled. The "concept" has suddenly changed because the ambassador of the Latvian Embassy has changed, and at the moment, the Laivas Association cannot meet in the premises of the embassy. With the busy lives of the Laivas participants, weekend meetings are more suitable than meeting during the weekdays, and the embassy does not allow access during the weekend. Normally they meet two times a month, and now they have changed to meeting only once, and their meeting locations vary, e.g. in October 2009, they went for a walk in the forest.

Learning songs was a major part of their meetings but now without the embassy premises they have decided to do different activities instead. The other issue is that the children are different ages and they are developing different interests. Another issue regards

organization aspects. Currently, the main organizer has a demanding job and can no longer spend the same amount of time planning association meetings as in the past. Since everyone has a life outside of the association, it is proving hard to organize efficiently. Although these issues have come to surface they are still accepting the annual membership fee from the families. With that being said, it has been difficult to collect the annual fee from some, but they still send Laivas newsletters to those families, and they do not deny participant despite the decline to pay the fee.

6.13 Participant's thoughts about the Laivas

Below are testimonials from Laivas participants as a reminder of why they joined and how they have felt about this association:

I didn't even know there that were that many Latvians in Finland. There were many years that I was living here, 4 years or 5 years, and I didn't meet anybody and I thought that there are not that many. Then we started to know each other in the Laivas and suddenly we realized, I even met my old study friend here! This was eye opening, Ok I am not alone here. And then we were sharing our experiences here and different kind of girls discussions because we are mostly girls here [laugh] that are meeting.

The activities that they do during the Laivas meetings like singing and storytelling has influenced the way her children are at home. One of the participants describes how touched one of the participants and even touched her mother when she was visiting:

We have this kind of place that we can go once per two weeks and meet. Of course first of all I'm so happy I really sometimes have tears in my eyes when I hear my children singing in Latvian language at home. It's touching, really, and my mother has heard it, and she was also so touched because I'm not able to teach that or I sometimes sing but not often and they have learned it and they just play and sing something in Latvian.

As for one of the founders of the association, the meetings provide a sense of togetherness with those experiencing similar things as an immigrant, in a mixed marriage with children. It also has been useful for her child:

I can't imagine how it would be without it[Laivas]. It is nice to hear other people's stories in mixed families. That you don't have to be ashamed of anything, but it's like a natural process that's going on […] for my child I think it is very important for her to know that "oh yeah there are other Latvian kids" and they can also speak Finnish and they can also speak Latvian, and that she also knows that she is not alone.

This association has provided a way to network as one of the participants described:

Networking, people know each other and they have gotten contacts and it was one of our objectives. I think that it's nice to meet people. But if the association will not exist in the future, the network will remain.

7. Conclusions

7.1. The Integration process in Finland for participants of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association

Finding a job did not come easy for some of the participants, while others did not express a problem with job seeking. Some of the participants expressed difficulties finding a job and some felt that it might have been from underlying discrimination from employers. Often the Finnish language was mentioned in connection with job seeking issues. One might assume that they were not hired for jobs because they could not speak Finnish; quite the contrary. Interestingly many of the women have a strong knowledge of the Finnish language, and some have even passed the most advanced level of Finnish lessons provided by the Finnish government. Even with the knowledge of Finnish, some of the women felt that by not being a *true Finn*, and instead someone with a Soviet background, was the underlying factor.

Six out of the ten participants faced underlying discrimination in different ways which also included feeling as though potential employers were discriminating against them. Other forms of discrimination included Finnish people calling them Russian in a negative tone and one participant even said she has been called a Russian hooker. A child of one of the participants' has even experienced being called a Russia at school. The participants' self-representations are similar to that of the self-representations of Sverdljuk's (2009) Russian informants discussed in section 2.7. That is, these Latvian women are career and family oriented migrants, married to men for love, and express deep commitment to their husbands and children. They also have expressed a commitment to maintaining their Latvian identity.

Loneliness was also a factor. Living in Finnish society as an immigrant with a child or children brought feelings of loneliness. These feelings of loneliness may have raised a need for belonging and a search for meaning, much like the discussion in section 2.4 and in turn caused these women to reach out to others with similar backgrounds. Though they have their husband's, many of the women expressed a need for social support (much like the discussion in section 3.2) with other women facing similar situations. A form of reciprocity

and trust has developed amongst the participants by talking to each other and sharing similar experiences, such as trying to cope in a new society. Creating the association, along with the choice to join this association did not just have to do with their children but in certain aspects had to do with the social needs of the adult participants. They wanted their children to be able to be in a Latvian speaking environment, learning Latvian songs, dances, stories and culture, while at the same time their personal needs could be met by having the opportunity to communicate and socialize with other Latvian women.

7.2 The emergence of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association

Firstly, living in a new society, as an immigrant, can bring many daily obstacles that one does not have to face in their homeland. Learning the norms and ways a new society works can take time, and can give the individual motive to try to reconnect with their ethnic background or at least with some aspects of their national identity. In the case of the participants in the Finnish-Latvian Family Association, many decided to participate because they wanted to provide a Latvian speaking environment for their children. The creators of this association connected through the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki and commenced the creation process to provide a means for Latvian's living in Finland to get together and provide a Latvian speaking environment that focused on Latvian culture and traditions for their children to learn.

The three founders of the Laivas had something in common when they started the creation process of this association, i.e., they were Latvian women married to Finnish men and had young children. Living in Finnish society was not providing enough ways for these women and their children to keep parts of their Latvian identity present, and therefore their motives to begin an association was focused on their Latvian heritage. The women also wanted to be able to speak Latvian and socialize with other Latvian women going through the same experiences of being an immigrant in Finnish society. Many of the women are married to Finnish men and have children and some of the participants explained that they wanted the opportunity to ask questions and learn about different ways of coping in Finnish society.

Any association cannot survive without active members. After the emergence of this association, it became necessary to reach others who were sharing the same life experiences. As mentioned above, the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki played a role in finding other potential participants. But there were other ways for these women to find out about this association. Most of the participants in this thesis found out through the Embassy on different levels. One of the founders found the other two founders with the help of the Embassy, and three other participants learned about the Finnish-Latvian Family Association through the Embassy, while another member found out at the Latvian Independence Day Gala, organized by the Latvian Embassy. One participant explained that she found out about the association through an internet search while another learned about it through another association.

7.3 Experiences moving to and living in a new country

Firstly, all of the participants in this Master's Thesis are women. Another similarity amongst the members which is also one of the motives for these women to join the association is the fact that they all have children. These women all share a common nationality as well, i.e., they are all Latvian and they are also considered immigrants living in Finnish society. This means that many of them have had to face certain life obstacles as a new member of a society and in turn causes a biographical disruption to their normal way of living back in Latvia.

Though one of the participants in this thesis is married to a Latvian, all of the other participants are involved in intermarriages or in other words a mixed nationality marriage. While eight are married to Finnish men, only one involved in a mixed nationality marriage is married to a Russian man. Therefore, interestingly the majority of participants in this Master's Thesis have husbands who do not share the same nationality, and most are Finnish men. This also means that those married to Finnish men are living in their husband's homeland. The three founders of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association are all married to Finnish men and have half Finnish half Latvian children and perhaps this is why they decided to include both Finnish and Latvian in the association's name.

For many of the participants in this Master's Thesis, the reason for moving to Finland was quite similar. The decision to move to Finland had a lot to do with love. Though one of the interviewees originally made the choice to move to Finland on the basis of education, her decision to relocate more permanently was based on her connection with a Finnish man and ultimately marriage. When the woman married to a Latvian man answered the question about reasons for relocation in the questionnaire, her answer was that they relocated because of her husband's job. Another respondent who answered the question similarly was the woman married to a Russian man. Though many of these women decided to move to Finland somewhat independently, and not because of their significant others' economic needs, in a sense they moved because of their emotions, and because of an emotional connection with the significant other.

Many of their stories differ from that of the participant married to the Russian man and the other married to a Latvian man, and also in comparison to many studies conducted on women who follow their husbands to other countries in search for economic stability. The stories of the women mentioned in this report, married to Finnish men, show to a large extent independence in their choices, by making the decision to move away from their homeland and start a life, basically from scratch. Though part of their motivation was love, many expressed the importance of continuing on their career path in Finland rather than staying at home. One of the interviewees even took initiative to find a new job in Finland before entering Finland and even postponed her move until she had a job waiting for her on arrival. This in turn provides rich details of these women's lives in Finland, being a part of a household that has both husband and wife as breadwinners.

Interestingly, the three founders of the association have a connection with Latvia, different than the other participants in this report. One of the founders worked for Latvia while living in Finland until she had her first child, while the other two founders have found ways of working for Latvia while living in Finland. One of the founders is a writer and has published her first children's book, and even works for Latvian radio, while the other founder continues to write for Latvia. The three founders have a strong connection with

Latvia although they have integrated in Finnish society, and have enhanced their own lives by keeping parts of their Latvian identity present by creating the association.

Many of the participants explained that they keep contact with their family and friends in Latvia on a regular basis. Some contact their family and friends one to three times per week. Not only do they use normal landline phones to call Latvia, but by using the internet through e-mail and Skype. Skype can be used just as a normal telephone, so long as a microphone is connected to the computer and one has internet connection. If both parties using Skype has a web camera, they can even talk to each other "face-to-face" by interacting through the web camera, used as somewhat of a live video. Also, Latvia and Finland can easily be accessed and with cheaper airfare and more connections available, many of the participants visit Latvia anywhere from one to four times per year, and their family and friends visit Finland as well.

7.4 Benefits of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association

Firstly, networking has made a big impact on these Latvian women's lives. The Finnish-Latvian Family Association gives Latvian women in the Helsinki area a chance to meet with other Latvian women who share a common cultural background. Many of these women are in intermarriages, married to Finnish men and have children who are living in Finnish society. In order to provide a Latvian influence in their childrens' lives, this association provides a space for Latvian traditions, songs, history, and stories to live on in a society where it could easily be forgotten. This also provides a chance for the children to understand that there are other children out there that have a similar background, i.e., a mother who is Latvian and a father who is Finnish. Since the Finnish language is the dominant language in Finland, the Finnish-Latvian Family Association allows the adults participating to speak in their mother tongue, while allowing their children to listen to their mothers socialize in Latvian, and perhaps learn vocabulary and even dialect which is not normally spoken in the home.

Living in a new society can bring loneliness and for these women, the association has provided a space where they can socialize and talk to other women who are experiencing

similar things, and discuss problems that they have faced or are facing, and even learn from one another how they have handled similar situations. Many of the participants in this report explained that it has been wonderful to be able to socialize with other Latvian women which has given the opportunity to connect with people who can speak their mother tongue.

Another way in which the children have benefited from the Finnish Latvian Family Association is the fact that they can learn Latvian folklore which includes singing and storytelling. Many of the participants felt that this was important to them, as a way of keeping certain Latvian cultural aspects in their children's lives. It has not only benefited the children but also the adults, where one participant explained that she is not good or comfortable with singing, for example, and she is pleased that her children can learn Latvian songs during association meetings. Latvian songs, in general, were very important to some of the participants. This was even one aspect that one participant felt was different between Finnish and Latvian culture. By attending the meetings, Latvian traditions through songs and storytelling can continue to be an important part of not only the women's lives but their children's lives as well.

7.5 Improving the Finnish-Latvian Family Association
The founders of the association expressed a need for more help by other participants in the organizing side of the association. A suggestion for this would be for certain jobs to be distributed and rotated each month, splitting up the amount of time necessary for the association meetings to function properly. One problem with this is that two of the participants explained that they love to be active during the meetings but not active in organizing. One of the founders mentioned that they have tried to divide the jobs but it has not worked out as they have hoped and another participant expressed worries that if the organizers do not have enough time to keep up with paper work and meetings then she is worried that the association will fail.

There were financial aspects that were mentioned as well. This association has an annual fee of 15 Euros per family. Other types of support have been offered by the Latvian

Embassy in Helsinki, providing the association space where the meetings can be held, free of charge; however, they do not offer space during the weekends, which has become a problem. The founders had refrained from applying for funding from the Finnish government, because of all the paperwork which is involved. Though they do not receive any financial support from the Finnish government, interestingly, the Latvian government provides funding for one of the association's yearly events, which is a summer camp.

One of the founders expressed the need for more funding. One of the interviewees suggested that it would be good to have funding for Latvian books. However, after a recent over the phone interview, I found that they receive Latvian book donations. With that being said, the association needs funding for supplies during their meetings. Many times if an event is held at a Laivas member's home, the finances come out of that particular member's pocket. Therefore, it would be beneficial for the Laivas to have funding for events that need particular supplies for handicrafts, food and so on. The Laivas annual summer camp has been financially supported by the Latvian government in the past but in 2009 they did not receive any funding. In 2008 the Laivas received a total of 858 Euros from the Latvian government for their summer camp. Although they did not receive funding in 2009, it was suggested that it did not make any difference because the amount of participants was either the same, if not more, than the summer camp in 2008, despite the fact that they needed to pay for it out of their own pockets.

The participants have expressed that they are happy to have the opportunity to take their children to Laivas meetings, all of the participants in this thesis expressed their appreciation for having a place where they can socialize with other Latvian women. When one of the participants answered the question concerning ways in which the association can improve, she suggested that it would be beneficial to occasionally have a women's night where the adults can get together, without the children, in order to discuss their experiences and even problems that they are facing in Finland (see Table 3, respondent 4).

7.6 Discussion

When taking a deeper look into an individual's biography, questions concerning their past, naturally, become a point of focus. C. Wright Mills stressed that sociology and the social sciences as a whole should deal with collecting biographical and historical information in order to fully understand social structures (Mills 1959, p 143). Learning about people's biographies can give insight into different experiences that may have played a role or at least could be used as an explanation as to why they have made certain life choices. Immigrants in a new society, in a way, have a biographical disruption because they have to learn the norms and ways of the new society. Things that are thought to be very simple, such as grocery shopping, needs to be relearned for immigrants living in a new society where, for example, the main language is different from their own. This biographical disruption forces the immigrant to think about their identity, asking questions about what is important to them, and what parts of their past do they want to continue to keep in their lives in a new society.

It was mentioned in this report that there has been an increase in immigrant populations in different parts of the world, and there is an increasing need for documenting different types of groups in society, for example, groups that create nationality associations. This could be the case for Finland as well. Though Finland has previously been considered a country of emigration, recent years have shown an increase in immigration, and there is a large amount of immigrant organizations available. Therefore, I feel it is relevant for researchers to document immigrant associations in Finland.

Latvian emigration and organizations was discussed in Chapter 5, and after analyzing my data, some similarities and differences were found when comparing the Laivas and Latvian refugee communities in the 1940s. Firstly, the Laivas applies a similar concept to their association as the Latvian refugee communities of the 1940s. Both groups have transnational connections, and focuses on Latvian cultural activities. Also, a main importance to both of these groups is the Latvian language. With that being said, there are differences between these groups as well. It is important to note that the refugees of the 1940s did not move voluntarily to the United States and other countries and during this

time they usually moved in greater numbers. In contrast, the participants of the Laivas voluntarily moved to Finland, many times independently. The refugee communities of the 1940s and forward often lacked the possibility to keep in contact with other Latvians in Latvia, and in comparison the Latvians today have the opportunity to stay in contact with Latvians in Latvia. Lastly, the Latvian communities living abroad during the 1940s often focused on raising awareness of their history and attempted to influence the political arena. Although the Laivas focuses on teaching their children about Latvian history, they are not trying to influence Finland's political arena.

As for Latvia, one of the consular staff at the Latvian Embassy in Helsinki suggested that the Latvian government would like to know *why* Latvians are moving away and not returning. This thesis can give insight into some of the Latvian citizens living in Finland, and gives somewhat of a picture that these women that participated in this study are continuing their Latvian culture and identity; not only are they practicing this out of self-interest, but also passing it on to their children despite the fact that they are no longer living in Latvia.

In a study on transnational families (discussed in section 2.5), the importance of one's family identity throughout one's life cycle was stressed and I found in my own research that this was an important factor in the lives of the women participating in this thesis. Some expressed the importance of family, in general, and staying connected to their family in Latvia. Some of the women even mentioned a sense of disappointment with their Finnish in-laws, because they have felt that there has been a lack of involvement in their children's lives. It was explained that Latvian families spend more time together, helping raise the children, and perhaps this association has helped them during this particular life phase.

Though the motives to move abroad can vary depending on the individual, research on migration topics have often studied working class immigrants, and when research is focused on women immigrants, the scope of research is often on women as the secondary immigrant. Indeed, the women participating in this research often moved to Finland

because of their husbands. But in this case the majority of the husbands cannot be considered primary immigrants, as many of them are from Finland. Therefore, the majority of the women in this research are considered primary immigrants.

Although many of the participants moved to Finland for love, one of the interviewees felt somewhat forced to relocate. She moved to Finland because of her developing relationship with her current husband, but felt that it was also necessary to relocate because she was receiving a low salary in Latvia. If she would have stayed in Latvia she mentioned the need to change careers in order to get a higher salary. Although one might assume that this participant moved to Finland to have economic support from her Finnish significant other, this is not the case because she has established her own career path in Finland.

One of the questionnaire respondents mentioned that Finnish people assume she is a "Russian hooker" and perhaps this statement can be interpreted as a need for expressing that she did not marry her husband for economic purposes; instead she has a high positioned career and mentioned that her reasons for moving to Finland included *education, work* and her *husband* (see Table 3 in section 6.1.2). This was not special to this respondent's case; others suggested similar experiences and confirmed that they did not marry their husbands for economic purposes but instead their purpose to marry was simply for *love*. These women that participated in this study were quite the opposite of the stereotypical notions that the public might expect of them; in other words in the study conducted by Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2006), explained in section 2.7, it was stated that Finnish citizens often have negative attitudes towards immigrants from countries such as Russia and Estonia.

One of the participants in this thesis expressed that people might automatically think she is a woman from a former Soviet country, living at home, unemployed, and basically using her Finnish husband for economic reasons. This was quite the contrary for the participants in this thesis. All of the women exude a confidence and a sense of independence. These women are strong, empowered and many have high positioned careers; something they have earned on their own, many times pre-marriage. Just as it was mentioned in section 2.6

Drew and colleagues (1998, 20) explained that the traditional nuclear family is decreasing in the European Union, and dual-income families are increases. This is true for many of the participants in this Master's Thesis.

One of the respondents of the questionnaire explained that she participates in the Finnish Latvian Family Association because she misses her family in Latvia, and this association helps fill that void; in essence, she feels that the Laivas is her family. This association proves useful in a sense for those who might need to feel a sense of belonging in a foreign environment, and a chance to get together with others who have common backgrounds. Some of the participants in this thesis explained that it has been hard to find friends in Finland and this association has enhanced their social lives. Although the association has helped some bond with others, it has not been successful for everyone. One of the participants explained that one cannot force friendship, and wishes that there would be more of a bond between her and the other participants. This particular participant stressed how hard it has been to make friends in Finland, and feels grateful for being able to provide a Latvian environment for her children and hopes that friendship connections will develop over time. Interestingly, others have been able to connect with old friends from Latvia through this association, with no recollection initially that the other was living in Finland.

Much like the spider and its web (discussed in section 3.4), the Laivas has faced difficulties maintaining the resources it needs for survival. Many outside factors can destroy the spider's web, such as a violent storm, a brush of a broom, or even the death of the spider. It has proved difficult for the Laivas to keep their web of interaction functioning properly with the recent changes involving the cooperation with the Latvian Embassy. Since the embassy has decided to decline the use of their premises for Laivas meetings, the activities have decreased from meeting two times per month, to only one time per month. An active spider is the only way to create a strong web, and with the time management and organizational problems that the Laivas has faced, such as the lack of help in organizing, and just simply the lack of time, the Laivas could slowly lose its' strength.

But in order for these women to keep a piece of their Latvian past in the present, these women come together, with their children, through this association which allows a multitude of options for them. Language, Latvian history and songs are important during their meetings. These three components can be seen as important aspects to these women's lives and has a connection to their identity. The importance of keeping the language present, not only in one's own social life, but in their children's lives has been expressed of great importance to members of the Laivas. In a society where Finnish is the dominant language, the Laivas provides a Latvian speaking environment, for families where Finnish is otherwise a key aspect of their daily lives largely due to the fact that many are married to Finnish men. Latvian history is another aspect of their meetings that they find important to teach to their children and this is incorporated in different ways during their meeting, for example, through storytelling and handicrafts. Lastly, songs can also tell a story of Latvian history. Not only do the songs tell a story, but it helps children develop the Latvian language. One of the participants mentioned that it brings tears to her eyes when she hears her children singing Latvian songs at home; songs that they have learned at the association. She went on to explain that she is not a singer herself, and perhaps would have never taught her children those songs that the association practices.

When keeping the postmodern framework in mind, it goes to show that our lives do not just have a linear structure, with a beginning, middle and end. We can experience multiple beginnings, i.e. multiple entryways, where different aspects of our lives play a role in our experiences. In a sense, one could predict that without the Latvian Embassy's support, the Laivas will slowly become inactive due to the constraints already listed; however, the end of one resource could play a role in an evolutionary development bringing new concepts and entryways to a new beginning for the Laivas. If the spider's web is suddenly destroyed, but the spider itself is still active, it can be sure that the spider will move on to the creation of a new web, and a *new* beginning.

7.7 Possibilities for Future Research

Interestingly, as I became close to the end of working on this thesis, I received an e-mail from a Latvian woman living in Turku, Finland, expressing her interest in my research. She

explained that something similar to the Laivas is forming in Turku. She is a mother and she meets with three other Latvian mothers with one potential woman joining soon. This is an informal meeting for Latvian mothers living in Turku to get together, and interestingly nearly all are married to Finnish men. This sounds very similar to the creation process of the Finnish-Latvian Family Association. The founders of the Laivas initially got together for the very same reason. This leaves room for future research on Latvian migration to Finland and the formation of other associations. Interview data collected for this reported could be useful for studies regarding Latvian culture in Finland, where discussions regarding traditions, and other aspects such as Latvian food and practices, were left out of this Master's Thesis. These aspects along with more extensive analysis on the interviewees' biographies can later be used for further research on Latvians living in Finland. Other research aims could compare the Laivas to other nationality associations. Lastly, another important issue that should be researched more extensively is regarding discrimination in Finland and this could include the experiences expressed by the interviewees. By raising awareness of discrimination that immigrants are experiencing in Finland, one can hopefully raise the level of tolerance of immigrant groups living in Finland and help development citizens who are open to change.

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Appendix 1
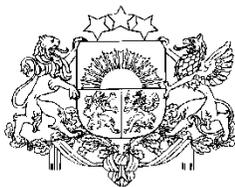
LATVIJAS REPUBLIKAS VĒSTNIECĪBA SOMIJĀ
EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA IN FINLAND

Helsinki, 23 July, 2008

Information from Finnish Immigration Service

1. *Number of Latvian citizens, living in Finland:*

2005	*2006*	*2007*
469	513	592

Information from Finnish Population Register

2. *Number of children born in Finland, who's:*

Year of Birth	*Only the father is Latvian*	*Only the mother is Latvian*	*Both patents are Latvians*
2005	0	23	5
2006	2	11	1
2007	5	17	2

Prepared by Santa Pučko

Third Secretary, Embassy of Latvia

23.07.2008.