At Home in Limbo.

Understanding the role of the community of Russian Christian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam in psychosocial well-being of its members with a history of migration.

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As the world becomes more thoroughly interconnected economically and politically, as people move about in unforeseen, only partially controllable, and increasingly massive, ways, and as new lines are drawn and old ones erased, the catalogue of available identifications expands, contracts, changes shape, ramifies, involutes, and develops.

Clifford Geertz
2000: 225

I suggest that rather than looking at religious migrants as at best conservative and at worst terrorist one should perhaps pay some attention to the creative moments in human responses to new challenges and new environments.

Peter van der Veer
2002:95
# Table of Content

Table of Content ........................................................................................................... 3  
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ 5  
Abstract ............................................................................................................................. 6  
Preface ............................................................................................................................... 7  
Chapter I. Background and research questions .................................................................. 8  
  1. Statement of the problem ........................................................................................ 8  
    1.1. General overview .............................................................................................. 8  
    1.2. Problem .............................................................................................................. 9  
    1.3. Major influencing factors ............................................................................... 10  
    1.4. Solutions in the past ..................................................................................... 12  
    1.5. Relevance of research topic .......................................................................... 13  
  2. Objectives and Research Questions ......................................................................... 14  
  3. Some key definitions and concepts ........................................................................ 15  
Chapter II. Methodology ............................................................................................... 17  
  1. Overview ............................................................................................................... 17  
  2. Data collection techniques .................................................................................. 17  
  3. Advantages and limitations of methods used ....................................................... 19  
  4. Data analysis ........................................................................................................ 20  
  5. Selection of key informants ............................................................................... 20  
  6. Description of sample ......................................................................................... 21  
  7. Research process and ethical considerations ...................................................... 22  
Chapter III. Results and analysis ................................................................................. 27  
  1. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 27  
  2. Context ................................................................................................................ 28  
    2.1. Orthodox Christianity ..................................................................................... 28  
    2.2. Russian Orthodox Church .......................................................................... 30  
    2.3. Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam .................................................... 33  
    2.4. History of St. Nicolas of Mira Russian Orthodox Church community in Amsterdam .............................................................................................................. 34  
    2.5. Description of setting ..................................................................................... 34  
    2.6. Divine Liturgy ................................................................................................. 35  
  3. Roots and Routes: Constructing Identities ................................................................ 41  
    3.1. Introduction ..................................................................................................... 42  
    3.2. Cultural bereavement and re-rooting .......................................................... 43  
    3.3. Roots: Spiritual Home, Family, Kinship ....................................................... 45  
    3.4. Routes: Belonging and Identity ...................................................................... 48  
  4. Resilience ............................................................................................................... 53  
    4.1. Introduction ..................................................................................................... 54  
    4.2. Resilience is contextual ................................................................................ 56  
    4.3. Resilience is complex .................................................................................... 56  
    4.4. Resilience can often be accompanied by emotional difficulties .............. 57
4.5. Contribution of Amsterdam Orthodox Church community to resilience. 57
Making sense of suffering. ................................. 59
Competence and self-efficacy .................................. 61
Social support ...................................................... 63
Fasting as a resilience training .............................. 66
Personal change .................................................. 68
Chapter IV. Conclusions ........................................ 70
Annex 1. References ............................................. 75
Annex 2. Table of Key Informants ............................ 80
Annex 3. Preliminary Problem Analysis Diagram ....... 81
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Abstract

At Home in Limbo: Understanding the role of the community of Russian Christian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam in psychosocial well-being of its members with a history of migration.

Key words: church community, belonging, identity, empowerment, resilience, personal growth.

Although religion is considered as one of the powerful factors variously influencing mental health positively or negatively, the knowledge on the role of religious communities in life and psychosocial well-being of migrants is underdeveloped. This study explores the contribution of participation in the community of Russian Christian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam to psychosocial well-being of its members with a history of migration in first generation. Key informants were consulted at the earlier stages of research to strengthen study design. Qualitative research methods were used—ethnographic study of church community with participant observation, in-depth interviews with 15 participants of various ethnic origin from countries of former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Serbia). Contribution of church community to the psychosocial well-being of migrants as a socio-cultural space and a psychosocial adaptive system, in re-rooting, construction of new identity, strengthening resilience and personal growth are discussed.
Preface.

People and communities are increasingly mobile. Many factors contribute to the increase of migration - natural disaster, war and famine; economic development and globalisation, leading to resettlement of people displaced by large scale infrastructure projects, and by changing land use and patterns of employment; population stresses - poverty, political oppression, long-term conflict and break down in civil society. Can we learn anything from recent experiences about how people deal with the adversities resulting from this mobility?

My first acquaintance with the community of Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam started in the early September 2006, when I visited Orthodox Church as I usually do everywhere in the world while traveling. This space, people, community I met there as a medical anthropology student from Georgia (a foreigner, temporary migrant, Christian Orthodox and the descendant of Armenian refugees from Turkey in Georgia), my previous NGO experience in psychosocial work with internally displaced persons in my home country, Georgia, were motivating to research and to understand the role of this community in life and psychosocial well-being of migrants in the Netherlands. Current challenges my host country, the Netherlands, and the World we live in, are facing due to migration were stimulating thinking about related problems and possible solutions.

Starting field research I wrote in the diary the wish for this work to become the new page in my biography and life experience in exploring belongings, identities, resilience- and psychosocial well-being. The new page in the (re)construction of my own Wholeness and Oneness.
Chapter I. Background and research questions.

1. Statement of the problem

1.1. General overview. Migration has become an integral part of global social and economic development and is becoming the major demographic issue of the 21st century.

Migration is the crossing of the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a certain minimum period of time. It includes the movement of refugees, internally displaced persons, as well as economic migrants. Migration is an important factor in the erosion of traditional boundaries between languages, cultures, ethnic group, and nation-states. Even those who do not migrate are affected by movements of people in or out of their communities, and by the resulting changes. Migration is not a single act of crossing a border, but rather a lifelong process that affects all aspects of the lives of those involved, including next generations.

Migrant populations in the Netherlands are diverse in terms of voluntary or forced migration, country of origin, first or next generations, and these groups widely differ by their socio-cultural characteristics, social participation, acculturation strategies and outcomes. Within this growing population of migrants, there are a substantial number of refugees, displaced by war or violation of rights in their own countries. In 2005 net migration rate in the Netherlands consisted 2.8 migrant(s)/1000 population. (Migration Information Source, 2005). A total of 19.2 percent of the population, just over 3.1 million, was officially counted in 2005 as being of non-native origin (i.e., with at least one parent born outside the Netherlands). About half (1.6 million) of this non-native origin population are first-generation migrants, meaning they were born outside the Netherlands; the other 1.5 million are second generation — born in the Netherlands with at least one foreign-born parent — and frequently citizens of the Netherlands or holding dual nationality. One large group of migrants in the Netherlands includes people from the former Soviet Union (among them, only refugees: 39 000) (Kamperman, 2004). The level of education of non-western first generation and second generation labour migrants is lower than the native population, this is also the case with most of the first
generation refugees. They usually work in low level jobs, and unemployment among migrants is about four times as high as among autochtone Dutch people. According to CBS (2003) the rate of people entitled to social benefit allowance is ten times higher, and the average income for migrant families is about 25% lower. These data do not include asylum seekers.

For many migrants, social inclusion in the Netherlands is rarely easy and for some impossible. Resistance to their presence- even when their work skills are needed- often places migrants on the periphery of society. Resistance to their participation in society results from language problems, culturally-defined behavior that often reinforces stereotypes and prejudices, from xenophobia and intolerance to diversity as well as

The focus on migrant adaptation to Dutch society and psychosocial well-being is linked to the political discussion about the position of migrants in the Netherlands, changes in legalization procedure, language proficiency requirements, asylum policy, so called trauma-paragraph in Dutch legislation opening doors for residence permit.

1.2. Problem. The process of displacement introduces threats to health and psychosocial well-being. The experience of migration is usually one of psycho-social transition analogous to bereavement. The term cultural bereavement (Eisenbruch 1991) applies especially to those people who suffer a permanent loss of their land and culture as unwilling migrants, exiles and refugees, suddenly uprooted because of war and persecution.

Migration is often a stressful and traumatic experience, involving disruptions of individual “life world” (Husserl: “the individual’s personal world as directly experienced”). Migrants have not only left family, friends and a familiar environment, many of their assumptions about the world in which they live are also no longer valid. They are faced with language difficulties, indifference or hostility from the local population, and with new cultural practices.

Literature data, in general, stress the negative health effects of migration. Available data suggest that cultural context plays an important role in predisposing some migrants to mental health problems such as depression and chronic anxiety. Just as with other
health indicators, however, there is a paucity of information on the incidence and prevalence of psychosocial health problems among migrants. Alcohol and drug abuse may be used as coping responses that expose migrants to other health problems such as HIV/AIDS. In general, the trauma and exclusion that migrants face increase risk behaviors, which, in turn, increases their susceptibility to all diseases. Available data suggest that cultural context plays an important role in predisposing some migrants to mental health problems such as depression and chronic anxiety. The rates of stress-related ulcer in some migrant populations in the Netherlands are ten times higher than in other populations. Rates of suicide and attempted suicide among children of migrants are significantly higher than among Dutch children. Children, particularly girls, of Surinamese immigrants had a suicide rate 27.6 times higher than that of Dutch children (Carballo & Nerukar 2000). The majority of migrants copes and stays healthy. Refugees present perhaps the maximum example of the human capacity to survive despite the greatest losses and assaults on human identity and dignity. At the same time, the positive sides of migration are still underestimated. It can become the turning point, can open new opportunities in life and personal development - more of that, through the process of overcoming of crises the interplay of risk processes and protective mechanisms can be seen as the construction of strengthened resilience - the ability to retain adaptive functioning while facing adversities.

1.3. Major influencing factors. The effect of migration on psychosocial health is influenced by several factors apart from individual factors, including coping resources, psychiatric morbidity before migration, other pre-migration factors such as voluntary or forced migration, the expectations of new life, and decisions to leave temporarily or permanently (Bhugra 2005). Some studies (Hourani et al. 1986) show that the experience of displacement may be a more useful indicator of its health effects than the fact or purpose of displacement. With time, psychological difficulties may increase rather than taper off among certain groups of resettled refugees, particularly the unmarried or otherwise unattached (Beiser 1988).

Uprooting, social isolation, discrimination, uncertainty and even threat of forced repatriation are interfaced with the loss of a homeland, social status, of the integrity of
the body and personality, of relatives, of social networks and family structure, social status and possessions, lead to intrusion on self-esteem, to cultural discontinuity and to a loss of sense of wholeness and belonging, as it is often seen in refugees (Van Dijk 2004)

Migration, even under the best of conditions, involves a series of events that can be highly traumatizing and that can place migrants at risk. The process involves uprooting, loss of social status, being separated from family and traditional values, and being placed in new social and cultural situations where job and legal security may be minimal. Whether migration is planned or not, voluntary or forced, some degree of stress is always involved. Migration means breaking with family, friends, and established social networks, departing from traditional routines, value systems, and accepted ways of behaving and having to adapt to new social and psychosocial environments. Combined with migration massive social loss such as that caused by uprooting, produces grief.

Many authors mention that social problems in the host country may be more important factors affecting mental stability, than even shocking events in the past. Several migrant risk factors for development of mental health problems are identified – as a low socio-economic position and specific risk factors concerning acculturation and social exclusion.

Acculturation process and strategies are considered by some authors as one of the factors affecting migrant well-being. Referring to the views of ethno-cultural groups, the following four acculturation strategies are distinguished by Berry (1997): 1) integration (accepting the new culture while retaining the native culture); 2) assimilation (accepting the new culture and rejecting the native culture); 3) marginalization (rejecting both the native and the new culture); 4) separation (rejecting the new culture and withdrawal in the native culture). They are linked to the respective strategies of larger society, such as multiculturalism, Melting Pot, segregation and exclusion. Some authors mention that integration outcome is linked to better psychosocial health (Berry 2003, Kamperman 2004).

Multiculturalism had been the key word and the explicit principle of the Dutch government's approach. After the 2003 elections, the word "multicultural" disappeared from plans of the center-right governing coalition's plans (Van Selm 2005). The new
stipulation is that people must integrate into, and understand the norms and values of a broadly tolerant Dutch community. The issue of integration is one of the highest priorities on the Dutch political agenda, particularly since 2004. The public perception of existing immigrants is that they are far from being fully integrated. At the same time, the tendency to keep migrants out remains. The Dutch immigration policy of the 1980s and 1990s called for integration that encouraged a conservation of migrant culture; the 2003 policy turn, in contrast, argues that it is the culture of the migrants that is causing non-integration. As a result, migrants are now advised to accept the core values (and customs) of Dutch society, though there has been little attempt to define what those values might be in the absence of ideology. There is widespread agreement that the multicultural approach of the past has failed both the Netherlands and its immigrants, and that tolerance is clearly showing its limits (van Selm 2005). As such, the acculturation of migrants in the Netherlands remains a prominent problematic (Arends-Toth 2003).

There is growing attention to religious cultures and health. Religious cultures are the powerful factors that modify the individual’s attitudes toward life, death, happiness, and suffering. Religious cultures can supply favorable conditions for the promotion of health transforming and giving new meaning to life and experience. But they can variously influence psychosocial health, positively or negatively. The role of communities of émigré churches placing emphasis on the possibility of expressing religious beliefs in a way familiar and habitual to immigrants for reinforcing the sense of belonging to and inheritance of, a particular ethnic background, the manufacturing of new identity is discussing in diaspora literature. In some cases these churches shelter the ethnic group from assimilation, while securing a smooth transition into the "host” society, presenting a bridge, enabling migrants to remain “ethnic” in the integration process (Fortier 2000).

1.4. Solutions in the past. Two frames of reference in dealing with refugees’ problems are defined (van Dijk 2004). The first deals with refugees as a burden, threatening society and requiring control; the second one presents refugees as traumatized victims. At the same time, by using the concept of trauma and PTSD, the history of refugee is rewritten through professional discourse, which leads to
medicalization of psychosocial problems and new kinds of victimization. The psychosocial and mental health care provided to migrants in the Netherlands does not result in undisputed positive results. Several authors have identified naïve expectations about the results of psychosocial interventions (Van Dijk et al. 2000)

A focus on the various intervening psychosocial adaptive systems and on concepts as safety, identity, grief, injustice and faith is mentioned as necessary (Silove 1999).

In general social support is viewed as beneficial for the well-being regardless of the situation (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend 1981). Participation in a meaningful social context is one of the ways of migrant empowerment. Participation in the restoration of a society’s heritage and culture and the development of new structures that offer foster justice and communal participation helps to restore a sense of collective identity (Silove, 2004). Social support is considered as the main identified buffer between migration stress and negative health effects (Rutter 1987, Van Dijk 2004).

1.5. Relevance of research topic. The data about refugee health in the literature are exclusively negative. Notably absent are studies of refugee health or of healthy refugees. A shift of focus from pathology to health can provide exits from the reductionism of medicine and from the medicalization of problems (Muecke 1992).

Despite the potential magnitude of the problem, relatively little is known about the dynamics involved or about what should and can be done to manage psychosocial well-being related to migration. Knowledge about inner landscapes or physical and symbolic places is not sufficient (Van Dongen 2004).

The knowledge about the ways how the majority of migrants copes and stays healthy is insufficient. There is little known about migrants from former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries in the Netherlands and their psychosocial wellbeing. At present there are no publications found. From this point of view they present an “invisible” migrant group and need to be investigated.
The contribution of transnational organizations creating the sense of belonging through practicing culture in imaginary fashion (something that is only possible outside the borders of original homeland) is discussed (Ghorashi 2004). The research in this direction started recently, should be continued as having important theoretical and practical implications in a contemporary “creolized” and globalized world (Hannerz 1987).

Although religion is considered as one of the power factors variously influencing mental health positively or negatively, the knowledge on the role of religious communities in the life and psychosocial well-being of migrants is underdeveloped. Exploring not only what is lost but also what remains, not only the source of vulnerabilities but also the sources of protection and resilience, is the first step towards empowerment of migrants. Protective factors and coping efforts are interconnected and have a synergic effect facilitating communication and mutual support, rebuilding the social network, broadening the coping repertoire, reinforcing functional adaptation and creating the opportunities for meaningful life, social participation, psychosocial well-being and, probably, even personal growth.

2. Objectives and Research Questions.

The objective of research initially was to explore the contribution of participation in an Amsterdam Christian Orthodox Church community to acculturation process, social support, creation of new identity, empowerment, psychological and socio-cultural adaptation and psychosocial well-being of migrants. During the research and analysis process, main research question is formulated as: How does being a participant of the Amsterdam Orthodox Church contribute to the construction of identity, resilience and psycho-social well-being for members with a history of migration? Reducing the sphere of research and analysis was unavoidable, because of quite wide range of research themes to be covered. Focus on identity was chosen- as self-concerns are at the center of individuals' striving for well-being and for making sense of one's life, and on the resilience, as a dynamic psychosocial concept, helping in deeper understanding of interplay of various factors in migrant religious community experience.
and psychosocial well-being. Of course, my personal interest, and experience through migrant life and research process, also influenced the choice of focus.

3. Some key definitions and concepts.

The use of term migrant and migration in the literature differs by countries and authors. The variations existing between countries indicate that there are no objective definitions of migration (UNESCO, electronic document). The term migrant can be understood by the definition of UNESCO as referring to "any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country." Though, this definition does not include displaced persons - who has been forced to leave his or her native place, a phenomenon known as forced migration (Wikipedia, electronic document) and the next generations.

In this study the term migrant is used broadly in respect to the persons having the existential experience of crossing the borders of nation-states during the lifetime with a history of loss of a familiar environment and of adaptation to a new one.

Exploring culture we will refer to Geertz's definition of culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (Geertz 1973: 89). Geertz considers culture as webs of significance that underlie social life and give it coherence and meaning, emphasizing the importance of the symbolic, of systems of meaning, as it relates to culture, cultural change, and the analysis of culture to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geertz 1973:5).

Identity is a feeling of sameness of a group or culture or individual as far as s/he is influenced by his/her belonging to another culture. Identity as sameness reflects the meaning of Latin word idem (the same). The term identity expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characteristics with others (Erikson 1980:109).
Resilience refers to the phenomenon of maintaining adaptive functioning in spite of serious risk hazards (Rutter 1987: 209), the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress -- such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

Masten, Best and Garmezy (1990: 425) define resilience as "the process of, capacity for, or the outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances."

Defining resilience is a continuing problem and there is a lack of consensus about the domain covered by the construct of resilience; i.e., its characteristics and dynamic. Some languages, like Spanish, do not yet have an equivalent word.

In this research we will use the concept of resilience as the human capacity to face, overcome, and even be strengthened by experiences of adversity. This concept of International Project of Resilience in 1996 is further developed as a definition of resilience as "a universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity. Resilience may transform or make stronger the lives of those who are resilient. The resilient behavior may be in response to adversity in the form of maintenance or normal development despite the adversity, or a promoter of growth beyond the present level of functioning. Further, resilience may be promoted not necessarily because of adversity, but, indeed, may be developed in anticipation of inevitable adversities" (Grotberg 1996, electronic source).

Psychosocial health and well-being. Psychosocial health is the complex interaction of a person's mental, emotional, social, physical and spiritual being. The term psychosocial involves the aspects of social and psychological behavior. Most definitions of the term 'psychosocial' are based on the idea that a combination of psychological and social factors are responsible for the well-being of people, and that these cannot necessarily be separated from one another. Wellbeing is defined as the state of being healthy, happy, or prosperous; welfare. Psychosocial well-being directs attention towards the totality of people's experience rather than focusing exclusively on the
psychological aspects of health and well-being, and emphasizes the need to view these issues within the interpersonal contexts of wider family and community networks in which they are located. In some sources the term "psychosocial well-being" is considered as similar to the term "health". It is understandable in the context of definition of health as by WHO as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, electronic document) and the holistic approach to health.

Chapter II. Methodology

1. Overview.
This study has taken an exploratory approach to consider the issues outlined before. The participation of the researcher in the community of Russian Orthodox Christian Church in Amsterdam created a basis for facilitation of research and provided the possibility to conduct research based on emic perspective. Qualitative research methods were used – ethnographic case study of church community and in-depth interviews of informants. Ethnographic case study was chosen as giving possibility to use the participant observation, context related information, the introspection of the anthropologist as a "research instrument" and the phenomenological approach to the analysis of research themes. Key informants were consulted at the earlier stages of research to strengthen study design.

2. Data collection techniques.
The data were collected through observation with high degree of participation of researcher in community activities to provide context related information. I used unstructured observation, during research the attention was given to spaces, actors, activities, objects, acts, events- set of related acts, goals and felt emotions. A diary was kept for field notes with concrete, descriptive, and contextual information such as dates, places, names of people and general information on observed situation.

As it was planned, the interview guidelines were worked out and used. The guidelines of interview were prepared for placing questions in logical order, to prevent bias in information collection. I tried to avoid vaguely phrased questions and closed questions.
During the process of interviewing I often was also asked questions by the participants, sometimes it led to the change of the flow. I tried to control the process- it was not easy, because the issues we discussed were meaningful for both interviewee and interviewer- but worthwhile, contributing to research.

The scope of work and the range of themes explored were quite broad and, sometimes, impossible to cover during one interview. I had the possibility to discuss some topics during the interactions, short term communications, observing and witnessing the intercommunications and behaviour of informants with other community participants. In five cases the repeated interviews were conducted. Only in one case I was asked by interviewee to provide written transcription of interview, although, they were informed about the availability of report.

The interviews length was in average one and half of hour, but sometimes, continued more then two hours. In the diary I was recording the circumstances of interview process, my feelings, thoughts, insights and reflections during the research. I was taking notes and in most of cases transcribed my notes at the same day.

The provision of planned formal focus groups discussion appeared problematic, because it did not fit the culture of the community. The informal discussions in groups of two or three participants were held. By observing the conversations and recording relevant points I also was gaining additional information. The observations of formal community meetings and informal discussions, as well as my conversations with community members provided me with the contextual information and helped to define the focus of the research. Initially videotaping was planned and agreed with the rector to illustrate the research data, later I decided not to use video-taping in research, because it was objected by some participants. Although filming is not unusual for the community culture and can be done with the permission, blessing of rector, after the episode of video-taping the pick-nick, the rector informed me that some people had the feeling of discomfort because of video-taping. Rector explained it by mistrust to videotaping by person who was previously asking people questions. Initially, I decided that video-taping has created the anxiety in illegal migrants, who had a fear to be identified. But later, it
was explained by rector as a resistance of one of the old community members to the new initiative – "People with stripped skin react when somebody touches them".

After this episode, I decided not to use my video data for the illustration of research data and to use the photos of one of the community members published on the website (with his permission).

The flexibility in changing and adapting the methodology helped to overcome time limitations and other constraints.

3. Advantages and limitations of methods used.

The participant observation contributed as a way to understand process and structure of social setting, to study explicit and tacit cultural knowledge and practices with the focus on community and groups. I was interviewing people, participating in events, observing how people behave to understand the meaning of this behaviour.

At the same time this type of interviewing and communication allowed person-to-person discussion that led to increased insights into thoughts, feelings and meaning of important issues. Among the advantages that were derived from using in-depth interviewing were flexibility and ability to observe non-verbal behaviors.

The research was done from emic perspective that is considered limited in its validity. Ethnoscience is considered "the science in inverted commas", the science representing a cultural preconception of the world but not its actual, "objective" conditions (Soekerfeld, 2001:529) At the same time emic perspective provides an impetus to grasp, in Malinovski's (1992:25) famous phrase, “the native’s point of view”. Emic knowledge was helpful in an intuitive and empathic understanding of a culture. In the description and analysis both the own terms and concepts of the community, and categories and concepts using by researchers-outsiders are used in attempt to combine emic and etic approaches.

In Orthodox Christian Church (at least, in ascetic monastic life) the curiosity and asking questions is not always appropriate. The formalized procedure of interviewing doesn’t fit the church esthetic, language, informal atmosphere and other cultural attributes of Orthodox Church. My field research period was coincided with the research by the team...
of Department of Theology of the Vrije Univeristeit of Amsterdam, I had the opportunity to use the advantage to be acquainted with the results.

The participation process, sometimes, was in contradiction with observation process—during the Liturgy I couldn’t move freely for the observation, during Sunday meetings—makes notes, video-tape some interesting moments of the ceremonies.

4. Data analysis.

Analyzing the data I processed the answers with similar characteristics in accordance to main research themes. Inclusion of different categories of informants was giving the possibility to compare and contrast data. Data from different sources were cross-checked. For the analysis I have used both- the deductive and inductive methods of coding, and, after the finishing field work had classified the information. It looked like many envelopes with pieces of paper, called eg. family, social support, change etc. The information I have gathered can be the basis for another papers- i.e. on religious coping. To maximize validity triangulation was used as a combination of different data collection methods- participant observation and in-depth interviews. To maximize the validity I discussed the data with some of my informants. I provided the informal focused discussions in small groups of two or three people. The data collected with the various methods were compared for inconsistencies.

5. Selection of key informants.

Interviewees were selected by snowball sampling technique. My first interviewees were the rector- migrant from Russia and "starosta"- administrator of parish council, Georgian migrant. At the very beginning of research three (3) snow-ball starting persons were identified - starosta of parish council, young activist-student and one of illegal migrants. All of them were respected and trusted by the most of community members, had contacts with many of members of community and were able and willing to recommend them and to introduce the interviewer. When introduced, I presented myself as a medical anthropology student doing masters research on the life of migrants in the Netherlands and the role of the Church in their life. At first I approached them with request to help me in investigating of what can and should be done to improve the life of migrants, but it was met with skepticism to the ability of the research to influence...
changes. Later I discovered that it was easier to convince people for the interview when I was simply asking for help with the writing of masters’ thesis.

6. Description of sample. I was able to conduct individual interviews with fifteen participants with the history of migration in first generation including the rector of Church, migrant from Russia and three Dutch community members - dean, secretary and the leader of group Miracle during 5 weeks of field research.

Six (7) of selected interviewees were males and eight (8) females. Forced migration was officially proved by refugee status in two (2) cases, two (2) of informants were in the process of asylum seeking, three (3) were stayed in the Netherlands illegally (without having residence permit).

Five (7) of interviewees were identified as a newcomers to the community - attending church within the period of 2 years; others attended Amsterdam church and identified themselves as a members with the stage of up to 16 years.

The countries of origin of interviewees were Ukraine, Russia, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Serbia, one of North Caucasus countries (non-specified). Four (4) of participants were of ethnic minority origins in their home countries, other two (2) - belonged to religious minority. For six (7) of interviewees the Netherlands were the third country of migration.

Five (5) of informants were single - never were married, four (4) were divorced having former spouses of Dutch origin, one was widowed, one - living with Dutch boyfriend. Two of informants were married and lived with spouses. At whole, five (5) informants have been officially married with Dutch partners, four (4) of them divorced. Another one - currently lives with Dutch partner while seeking the asylum (partner is currently homeless and unemployed).

The motives of marriage are explained as a necessity of legalization while being in love relationships. The motives of divorce are explained as unwillingness of Dutch spouses to have children in two (2) cases, as the differences in the attitude to the freedom in
spending time with friends outside of home separately of spouse in two (2) cases, mental problems of spouse (explosiveness and obsessions) also in two (2) cases. Only in two (2) cases divorced persons (having children in marriage) are getting limited material support from former spouses.

7. Research process and ethical considerations. Field research was conducted between May 15, 2006 and June 22, 2005, but my first acquaintance with the community of Amsterdam Orthodox Church started well before, in the early September 2006, when I visited church first time (as I usually do everywhere in the world while traveling.)

During my stay in Amsterdam I was visiting Amsterdam Church on Sundays quite often, met many people. I was witnessing the historical event in the life of Amsterdam Orthodox Church - move to the new “Home”, new building in Jordan district of Amsterdam, and even contributed a bit as a volunteer in the process of cleaning and preparation for relocation in the new building with many other people. It gave me a sense of participation in building of future development of new church, and even the ideas of social services possible to be organized there. I was the participant and witness of the most important events in the life of Orthodox Church during past year, like celebration of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost day, community Sunday coffee meetings after the liturgy, I was witnessing the creation of new foundation “Blagovest” aimed the promotion and development of Russian spiritual music culture, attended the first concert in the new building of Church attended by Archbishop, parish meeting and discussion on the rift in Sourozh diocese in Oxford having old strong connections with Amsterdam Orthodox Church, spiritual life and tradition. I was getting and discussing the news from Georgia with Georgians, had the opportunity to refresh my musical education attending the repetitions of choir, enjoying the acquaintance with the best samples of Russian, Dutch, Greek spiritual music, discussing the processes in Russia and Georgia with Dutch participants of choir.

I made new friends from different countries, from various background, was getting the useful information, advice, and even emotional support dealing with the stressful episodes of my life in Amsterdam.
The idea of research was discussed with the rector of Church before the design of research proposal, research topic was consulted with the suggestion to focus on integration of migrants, and appreciated after presenting the problem statement with a permit to conduct research and make a short video film.

The researcher and main topic of research was introduced by rector at one of the official parish meetings before the start of field research period with the request to present the data on one of the community meetings. Informed consent was obtained before the study began from the community gate-keepers, rector of the Church, who is at the same time the Head of Parish Council and “starosta” - the administrator of Parish Council.

From the outset I informed all those I came in contact with that I was conducting research on the migrants adaptation and acculturation in the Netherlands and the role of Church community in their well-being.

Participation of the rector at the earliest stage of the defining the research objectives, as well as participation of researcher in community well before the start of the research, were assisting to set up trust relationships with members of the community. At the same time, it was creating a sense of responsibility and, probably, even the sense of restriction if discovering of the data which are not in the interests of community leaders. But from the very beginning of project design it was clear that the principles of beneficence, justice and harm avoidance should be respected in any case.

The church in which the research was held refers to Russian Patriarchy while I represented the country (Georgia) currently in political conflict with Russia. I was expecting that it can affect the mutual trust relationships between the researcher and community leaders or some informants. During the research the relationships between Russia and Georgia were even worsened, but I never felt any tension between the Russian and Georgian community participants. The strong presence of Christian Orthodox system of values, multicultural atmosphere of Church created by leaders, my respect and closeness to Russian cultural tradition coming from my Russian education background and experience of Church life and study in Russia made my task easier.
Nevertheless, a kind of watchful and cautious tension in relationships with some community members appeared immediately after the information about research conduct. It had various reasons, and one of them - the roles change - I realized later, than other possible reasons: from the one of community newcomer- members I became an outsider, researcher, the mirror, as I was called by the rector. This phrase "you will be our mirror" was repeated creating the feeling of responsibility. At the same time it was helping me in the positioning to the role of observer. The position of researcher was creating the strange feeling of power and anxiety that I can not deal successfully with my task.

To organize the interviewing process and convince people for the interview appeared more difficult, than I expected. When I was explaining that the interview needs one hour to talk, everybody preferred to do it during Sunday coffee meeting or immediately after the Sunday service or postpone it to the next Sunday. To make the special appointment was not always possible, especially with illegal migrants, some people promised to call to agree on appointment, but didn't. Especially difficult appeared to convince the asylum seekers or refugees to be interviewed. I have discovered, that people who recommended me to talk with somebody in some cases even didn't have exact information about each other's legal status.

The reasons of the difficulties in involvement in interview process were connected with the sensitivity of the topic, but can be also explained as follows:

- Influence of inherited culture of fear existed in communist countries, the resistance and mistrust to everything connected with collaboration with official structures. Even the word "informant" is associated with "informer", "denunciator" of KGB or other "informational" services of former communist space.
- People in the process of asylum seeker are anxious and suspicious to any procedure of gathering information because of uncertainty and threat of deportation. As I was told "informational network in this country is well developed. It is better not to speak at all." - George (Here and further, see Annex
I have heard the stories about neighbours informing authorities and getting official rewards, and people in the asylum centres receiving benefits from the denunciation. I have heard also that the general situation in the country last years is characterized by existence of fear connected with current policy and attitude to migrants. And it is reflected, as in the prism, in the Church community. As one of the participants (60 years old female from Georgia), who’s parents were repressed in former Soviet Union, said “37-th year is here” (well-known year of Stalin’s repressions in SU). Interviewing is associated with the experience of migrants during legalization period or official investigation procedure of authorities. Network of “informers” and culture of denunciation, some of them believe exists in host country, can negatively affect their life. Although many others does not share this opinion.

- Illegal migrants who attend Church are especially sensitive to discovering of identity (taping, videotaping) because of possible sanctions.

"In this church we know each others many years, but we never ask questions, it is not appropriate here. This is "critical space" - please, write it down. Some people went through many countries, changed the names, to get here. They obtained a kind of resort, and you can put all this under the threat again". - 60 years old female from Georgia

Another reason could be that the belief exist that international organizations fund anti-Church, anti-Orthodox influence and the information given can negatively affect the interests of Orthodox Church community. When the team of Vrije Universiteit was conducting the research in the Church there were also refusals of some people to fulfill the questionnaires. At the same time this co-incident caused in the beginning a kind of mistrust, I have heard from people i.e. that “it is strange, last time there is an increased interest to our Church.” (40 years old male, Dutch).

But, I think, the main reason was that people, in general, and, especially “wounded” people do not like to be the “objects” of research. And, as one of the informants said: "It is not easy to be open for people who are wounded." - Elizaveta.
One of the participants (60 years old female from Georgia), who refused to be interviewed said: “I don’t agree to participate in interview, but we can simply talk. You can use the content of our conversation - I don’t mind. Later she explained: “Only recently I had experience with mediator, that’s why I rejected to be interviewed by you. Many years before, the same happened with psychologist, these people are indifferent to my pain, it hearted me, made me crying.” And during our informal conversation was trustful.

And, of course, for Georgians who continued the contacts with relatives and friends in home country, and who discovered common friends or acquaintances with me, the openness appeared most challenging. Among the four of community-participants who refused to be interviewed, three were from Georgia and one- asylum seeker from Russia. I was somehow frustrated by this “rejection”, but realized the reasons, and met with respect their choice in the situation when they felt they do not wish to be open. I was open in discussing my difficulties during research process and expressing the wish of contribution of research to the development of Church in helping migrants.

I tried to keep the distance to make research more objective, tried to control my feelings and to avoid projection and counter-transference. One of the insights at the later stage was, that research process and analysis is not only alienating me from the Church community, but is depriving me from the beauty and mystery of service and the feeling of holiday I had experienced before, while enjoying the service. To be the native and the stranger, participant and researcher at the same time, created also, sometimes, the feeling of internal conflict, sometimes- the helplessness. But, at whole, the field research process was extremely interesting, I met and was acquainted with the stories and destinies of people with a rich life experience, philosophy and worldview, oriented on personal development and service, retaining the dignity and humanity, and smiling in spite of all complications and adversities of their life. It helped me in choosing of the focus of study- personal growth and resilience in the process of psychosocial change.
I was invited to home of some of them, listened stories about their life at home countries and in the Netherlands, family problems, relationships with people—friends or relatives—there or here, losses and achievements. During my visits I was afforded tea and coffee, sometimes dinner, people were asking about my plans and future, giving me advices, suggestions—such as to use questionnaires in the research, to stay in Holland longer, to find job in Amsterdam etc. Some of them willingly answered to the questions, some watchfully were asking many questions about my past and present, plans, affiliations, donors.

The identities of the interviewees are changed in such a way that their privacy would be protected, while I use the real names of the rector and community leaders who are well known and whose biographical data will be recognizable, with their consent. For the privacy protection I use only the photo of community were the identities are not recognizable. The principle of respect for persons is supported by guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of all other informants and participants.

Chapter III. Results and analysis.

1. Introduction. In this chapter I will discuss how the community of Russian Christian Orthodox Church contributes to the psychosocial well-being of its participants, strengthening resilience. I will argue, that the process of meaning making, successful coping—whether emotional or problem solving coping, available mentoring and social support (in the context of the community and the spiritual family support) create the sense of self-efficacy, internal locus of control and contribute to the construction of optimism and hope, transform the adversities into open opportunities and, therefore, contribute to the adaptation and meaningful life. I will show how the process of the participation in the church community not only supports dealing with adversities of life, but makes available the positive personal changes, active life position and personal growth.

For this reason, I will describe the context of community of Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam where my informants are involved as a participants, I will analyze the structure of community and community life, it’s role for my informants—core members
and newcomers, the contribution of participation in community to the re-rooting, (re)construction of identity, to the autonomy of self and to the sense of control over the life events. I will discuss the role of this community as a psychosocial adaptive system strengthening resilience and promoting personal growth, and hence, contributing to the psycho-social well-being of its participants.

2. Context

2.1. Orthodox Christianity. Eastern Orthodoxy is the second largest Christian communion in the world after the Roman Catholic Church and the third largest grouping overall after Protestantism. There are approximately 240 million Eastern Orthodox Christians worldwide. Whilst the major Orthodox Churches are found in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, there is a growing number of Orthodox Christians spread throughout the world, and there are few countries without an Orthodox presence. The present-day influence of the Eastern Orthodox Church encompasses the territories associated with the former Byzantine and Russian empires: Eastern Europe, Asia (Russia/Siberia) and parts of Finland, the Middle East and Africa. Today, although Eastern Orthodoxy’s strongest influence can be seen in Greece, Georgia, Cyprus, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, and The Orthodox Church has a presence in a great many other countries largely because of the emigration of Eastern Orthodox peoples, with large communities in the USA, Canada and Australia.

The Orthodox Church considers itself to be the continuation of the original church started by Christ and his apostles. For the early years of the church, much of what was conveyed to its members was in the form of oral teachings. Within a very short period of time traditions were established to reinforce these teachings. The Orthodox Church claims to have been very careful in preserving these traditions. When questions of belief, or new concepts arise the Church always refers back to these early beliefs and those truths that have been built on them. They see the Bible as a collection of texts that sprang out of this tradition, and the choices made in forming the New Testament as having come from comparison with already firmly established belief. This Eastern
Orthodox Church is organically the same congregation (or *ecclesia*) which was born at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem on Pentecost, a direct continuation from the Apostles by laying on of hands from each generation of priests to the next. The Orthodox Christian recognizes the rich Christian heritage and proclaims that he belongs to this Church, which corresponds to the Church of the Apostles.

The ultimate goal of the Orthodox Christian is to achieve Union with God. Salvation therefore is not merely an escape from the eternal bondage of death, but an entrance to life in Christ here and now. Man is not seen as inherently guilty of the sin of Adam. According to the Orthodox, we inherit the consequences of that sin, not the guilt. Therefore, the Orthodox Church does not teach that we are born deserving to go to hell, and Protestant doctrines such as Predeterminism that result from the Augustinian (Roman Catholic) understanding of Original Sin are not a part of Orthodox belief. The Orthodox approach to sin and how to deal with it is never "legalistic". Following rules strictly without the heart "being in it" does not help a believer with his salvation. Sin is not about breaking some set of rules; rather, it is the name for any behavior which fails to live up to the higher goal of being like God.

A traditional practice of Orthodox is to have a spiritual guide to whom one confesses and who treats the sin on an individual basis. In the Eastern Orthodox Church a saint is defined as anyone who is currently in Heaven, whether recognized here on earth or not. For the Orthodox, body and soul both comprise the person, and in the end, body and soul will be reunited. Orthodox Christians believe, God is love, and his love does not change, and so it is our acceptance or rejection of that love that will bring either heaven or hell upon us. Man is free to reject the gift of salvation continually offered by God. God becomes powerless before human freedom. He cannot violate it since it flows from His own omnipotence. Certainly man was created by the will of God alone, but he cannot be deified [made Holy] by it alone. The love of God for man is so great that it cannot constrain, for there is no love without respect. Divine always will submit itself to detours, even to revolts of human will to bring it to a free consent (Lossky 2001).

A repressive environment has anchored Orthodoxy deep within Greek identity. With its strong bureaucratic structure at the diocese-archdiocese level, Orthodoxy has a layered
con-federal organization of self-governed parishes on the one hand and autonomous or autocephalous Churches on the other. It usually compromises with the democratic spirit of the communities, but can be challenged by them. These community structures are another main component of the Greek identity coming from a pre-Christian stratum, the ancient city-state. These two models of political organization continue to compete within the diaspora even though the first model is now predominant. Eastern Orthodoxy remains religiously prominent in the Orthodox heartland of Greece, Russia, and so on—areas that until fairly recently have not known much if any democracy. Nonetheless, the Trinitarian theology of Orthodoxy leads it to value freedom and equality, and to take a largely positive view of democracy. Along with democracy, however, come phenomena such as pluralism, difference, and competition, about which many Orthodox believers and churches feel considerably more ambivalent. The identity-cards controversy in Greece, arguments over religious liberty in Russia or Georgia illustrate various aspects of this ambivalence.

2.2. Russian Orthodox Church. As one of the community members, Nancy Forrest writes in her essay: "Many in the West are learning about the Russian Orthodox Church for the first time. For some it is a curiosity, something peculiarly Slavonic and eastern, colored with national identity. But for many others, the Orthodox Church, with its wonderful spiritual treasures, is an unexpected gift from the East" (electronic document, accessed 20 April 2006).

The roots of the Russian Orthodox Church, which now has a membership of around sixty million, lie in the baptism of Kievian Rus' in 988, following the conversion of Prince Vladimir of Kiev. The Metropolitan – at that time under Constantinople – moved to Moscow in 1326, following the devastation of Kiev in the Mongol invasion. The Russian Orthodox Church became independent of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1448. In the twentieth century the Russian Church suffered severe persecution and produced many martyrs under the communist regime, up until 1988. The waves of emigration from Russia following the 1917 revolution and the Second World War carried the Russian spiritual tradition into many parts of the world. While some broke away from the Patriarchal Church, others, including Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (dioceze in Oxford) stayed within it. The emigre church split from the
Patriarchate three years after the Bolshevik Revolution and cut all ties in 1927, after Patriarch Sergiy declared the church’s loyalty to the Soviet Union’s communist government.

There were continuing negotiations to bring about reconciliation and communion among those of the Orthodox spiritual tradition. The disputes between the two churches were the longstanding accusation that the "Emigres" make against the "Moscovites": kowtowing to governmental authority. But the greatest accusation was ecumenism—"heresy of heresies"—fellowship with non-Orthodox confessions. In order to remove the disagreements, commissions of Russian Patriarchate and The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia ROCOR (so called émigré church) have been created. The task of the commissions is to work out common understanding on the principles of mutual relations between the church and state and principles of mutual relations of the Orthodox Church with non-Orthodox communities. If the two churches manage to settle the fundamental disagreements, unification will occur. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) announced in May, 2006 it would move toward reconciling with the Moscow-based parent church from which it split after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The two churches would still have separate administrations, but would bond spiritually and allow their followers to worship in each other’s churches. Each church still would maintain their own council of bishops, but priests could participate and lead mass in both churches. The two churches also could cooperate with religious education, youth programs and missionary activities.

On the background of this reconciliation process a power struggle has taken a place within the UK branch of the Russian Orthodox Church, over a plan to break from Moscow Patriarchy. For decades until his death in 2003, the church- Sourozh diocese, was led by Anthony Bloom, who was born in Switzerland and educated in Paris. A one of the elements of Metropolitan Anthony Sourozh’s legacy as a founder of the Sourozh diocese was missionary openness. Metropolitan Anthony encouraged the development of a distinctive style, liturgical practice and ethos within the diocese which reflected the fusion of Franco-Russian emigrants and Oxford-London ex-Anglicans in the diocese. This included native-language liturgy, frequent communion, discretion over confession before each communion, a relaxed attitude to tradition Russian church dress (e.g. for
women: skirts and headscarves), permission of marriage on Saturdays and an avoidance of celebrating the full hierarchical liturgy according to the standard. Under his leadership, the church thrived and developed an independent, "Western" character. Metropolitan Anthony consciously sought to implement in Britain the integration of the laity into the administration of the Russian Church. The Diocese of Sourozh, however, was unique in attempting to carry out such a programme while remaining with the Moscow Patriarchate. Metropolitan Anthony's emphasis throughout was on the whole people of God, while at the same time he was a resolute opponent of what he called 'churchianity'. (Electronic source, http://www.dioceseinfo.org/COMMENTS/index.html)

These values were resisted by many of the church's new, more conservative Russian-speaking members, who made up the bulk of the congregation. They expected a traditional church similar to that they grew up with.

The difficulties arose during the last years of Metropolitan Anthony when a small minority of new arrivals began to try to change the direction of the Diocese to what they thought of as 'truly' Russian. In a frank letter to clergy and congregation on 1 May, Bishop Basil—an American, who changed Metropolitan Antony after his death, set out his reasons for wanting to leave the Moscow Patriarchate. He explains, that "for some years the Cathedral parish in London has been troubled by conflict between two groups of parishioners with very different interests and, indeed, styles of churchmanship". He concedes that "a claim is being made that there is support within the Patriarchate for those who are waging the campaign against the leadership of the diocese" (The letter of Bishop Basil to the clergy and Diosean Assambly 1 May, 2006, electronic source). This claim was not denied. Patriarch Alexiy II said in a letter to Bishop Basil: "What you propose is not only a step backward. Going down the path of a multiplication of divisions we risk losing... peace and stability in Universal Orthodoxy, and the eventual price will be new suffering for the flock." (The letter of Patriarch Alexiy, 5 May 2006, electronic source) The new bishop was appointed by Moscow Patriarchy to Sourozh dioseze and the problem of the church property – worth millions of pounds invested by the community - was solved this way. Bishop Basil with a part of congregation is now substituted to Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The parish was divided with a part of it moved with Bishop Basil from the "Home"-Cathedral, part- stayed under the new leadership of Sourozh. Service in Cathedral is now conducted almost exclusively in
Russian. As one of the old community member writes in her letter: "I was saddened...
What sort of message is this giving to non-Russian speaking children? Being a foreigner,
I can relate completely to the need for parishioners to meet with like-minded people
from the same country, as well as with their desire to worship in a church that closely
resembles those at home. I believe strongly that the cathedral, the mother church of the
dioese, should be one place where all Orthodox believers can worship together in
peace, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, nationality and sentiment". (Letter from
Parishioner Alexandra Milton, electronic source). Another parishioner writes: "We have
serious problems now, but these are not national problems, neither are they problems of
language. They are problems faced by an established Orthodox community with its own
strong life under attack by an extraordinarily numerous immigrant group of Orthodox
neophytes." (Letter from a Russian Sourozh parishioner of 45 years' standing, electronic
source).

The opponents of Sourozh dioeseze tradition claim now that fragments like Sourozh are
prone to Renovationism- combination of Orthodoxy with Western liberal humanism, and
even, a kind of "sect".

Meanwhile, there is a process of "fragmentation" under way in some former Soviet
republics.

2.3. Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam. The Orthodox presence in
Amsterdam begins in the 17th Century – when the Saint Catharine Chapel stood on the
city's Oude Zijds Voorburgwal.

Russian and Greek merchants and seamen attended services there. In 1697 Peter the
Great worked for some months at the Amsterdam shipyard of the Dutch East India
Company. He attended church there as well.

The marriage of Anna Pavlovna (1795-1865), the sister of Tsar Alexander I, to the
future King Willem II (1840-1849) in 1816 added another chapter to the history of the
Orthodox Church in the Netherlands. Queen Anna Paulowna, as she was known by the
Dutch, was well known for her charitable works. In The Hague, the royal residence, a
Russian church was built for her. This church became the fountainhead for Orthodoxy in
the Netherlands, especially in the 20th century. After the Bolshevik revolution the émigré church of the ROCOR functions in Amsterdam with monthly services for its congregation.

2.4. History of St. Nicolas of Mira Russian Orthodox Church community in Amsterdam. Father Alexis Voogd, in 1990-es a head of the Slavic Institute at the University of Amsterdam, Tatiana his wife, migrant from Russia, and several others, including Father Antony du Pu, currently one of the priests, founded St. Nicholas of Myra Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam in 1974. The church is believed to be under the protection of Saint Nicholas- one of the most beloved saints of the Orthodox Church. He is believed to be the patron and protector of Amsterdam.

The congregation was created under the spiritual leadership of Mitropolitan Antony Sourozh. All these years the community was maintaining spiritual ties with Sourozh diozeze of UK, such as regular participation in yearly conferences of Sourozh diozeze in Oxford, and was developing under its strong influence. The Church officially belongs to the dioceze of Den Hague and the Netherlands that since 1991 temporarily substitutes to Archbishop of Brussels and Belgium Simon (Ishunin) and, respectively, to Russian Patriarchy.

For the first few years, the congregation used for the services a chapel in the Roman Catholic St. Nicholas Church near Central Station, then moved to a chapel on the Utrechtsedwarsstraat. That small group of people has grown into a strong parish, with some of its members living quite some distance from Amsterdam. As a result of the emigration of many East Europeans to the West after the fall of communism, the congregation was growing, and in 1995 the decision was made to purchase the Immanuel Church on the Kerkstraat. Recently, the Church changed the residence moved to a new home, as it is often called, which is located in Jordan district of Amsterdam- a location where from 1913 to 2004 the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin had a monastery.

2.5. Description of setting. The monastic complex block, where from 1913 to 2004 the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin had a monastery, delineated by the Tichelstraat, the Lijnbaansgracht and the Gieterstraat. The complex has a great number of rooms where the Capuchin monks lived and worked: residence cells, a large kitchen, a refectory and a beautiful choir loft, among others. There is also a chapel, named the Immanuel Chapel,
on the Tichelstraat. This monastery had a long tradition as a spiritual centre for generations of Amsterdam residents. When it became clear that there weren’t enough monks to keep the monastery open, the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin decided to look for ways to ensure that the complex would remain a centre of prayer. The brothers of Order made various efforts to meet the needs of the Orthodox parish, and a significant discount off the market value of the complex made it feasible for the parish to purchase the building. As it is claimed by the community, the goal of the Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas is to preserve the Tichelkerk as a place of prayer, spiritual life and ministering to social needs of the city of Amsterdam.

The divine services are held on Saturdays at 5.30 p.m. and on Sundays at 10.30 a.m., mainly in Church Slavonic the first and third Sundays of the month, mainly in Dutch the second and fourth Sundays. The divine liturgy is held in a big church hall—at least 500 sq. m. The smaller part of hall-altar—half-bounded for priests and altar servants, is visible for service participants, as it was in times of ancient Christianity.

The Church building interiors are covered with the icons of saints. Just as the believers symbolize the cherubim standing before God, so the icons also represent the invisible. They do not copy the world, as ordinary paintings do, but give an impression of heaven. That is why icons do not copy exactly what we see in nature. The saints are unusually elongated, their faces without nuances, their attitudes awkward. The icons are not intended as decoration. They are part and parcel of the Liturgy.

The space of Church is still not used fully. Upper floors with many rooms are not used intensively. As the rector said: “We [community] should learn to be disposed on this space.”

The main loading is on the first floor where the Divine liturgy and Sunday coffee-meetings are held.

2.5. Divine Liturgy. A private prayer cannot satisfy the spiritual needs of Orthodox Christian unless it is intimately connected with public prayers. Public prayer or worship is offered by the Church, a group of people that proclaims the same beliefs and makes the same requests to God. The Divine Liturgy is the chief act of Greek Orthodox public
worship. It is a public service of approximately two hours that is a worshiping testimony of the Revelation of God.

In the Divine Liturgy the divine and the human, time and eternity, the now and the remote, spiritual longings and earthly desires, cries of distress and exclamations of joy, and several other contrasts and antinomies are united into an organism of harmony and real life. The Orthodox attending the Divine Liturgy is not an isolated person who comes simply to hear a sermon. Rather, he comes as a member of the Community of Faith who participates in the very purpose of the Church, which is the worship of the Holy Trinity.

In the Russian Church, there is a remarkable event that follows the Liturgy on the Sunday. Standing before the congregation, the priest confesses his sins as pastor and begs the forgiveness of those present. One by one each member of the church comes to the pastor, and then to every other member of the church, continuing the process of confession and forgiveness. “Forgiveness Sunday”, as it is called, is one of the immense treasures of Russian Christianity healing many wounds that have accumulated during the year in each parish.

Russian Orthodox worshippers usually stand. They stand in the presence of God, it is more than two hours, and at the Easter night service- more than four hours. They are not just the spectators but the participants of liturgy drama and standing gives them the freedom to worship. They stand so quietly that it does not cause a disturbance if someone walks round to venerate the icons. The body language of Orthodoxy includes much use of the sign of the cross, a wordless amen accompanies many prayers. Often a small bow is combined with the action, a small but significant physical gesture of inner reverence. During the service talks are restricted. I met the refugee from Georgia living in Amsterdam 15 years and tried to communicate, but our talk was stopped by two participants who asked us to stay in silence. Some people have their habitual places, chairs and others authorize their “rights” on these places. The worship reaches a climax during the Cherubic Hymn. 'Lay aside all our worldly cares!' sings the choir. During the Cherubic Hymn a feeling of holiness falls over the church, of mystery and profound awe.
Non-verbal communication is especially important in interactions, the reasons are that on one hand, verbal interaction is restricted in situation of religious service, on the other hand, movements and gestures serve as symbolic acts and expression of interrelationships with invisibly present God, saints and representing them icons, serving priests and audience.

Choir has traditionally hierarchically higher position than other part of community as well as the music is an important part of the service. The choir is leading by a professional musician, wife of the rector and daughter of former rector-founder. Most part of choir consists from Dutch participants, having professional musical education and/or experience in spiritual music singing, enhancing through regular weekly Wednesday repetitions.

2.6. Description of the community. The community of Russian Christian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam currently includes participants with a wide diversity of national/ethnic backgrounds. The core of the community, the parish mainly consists from about 250 people, although at some divine services the number of participants grows as much as thrice- as it was at the Easter celebration day on April 23, 2006. People of twenty nationalities form the core community, the majority of them representing migrants from former USSR, some Eastern European counties (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia), and autochtone Dutch people playing significant role in the life of community. There are also few migrants from other countries, e.g. US, Eritrea, France. Amsterdam Orthodox Church is lead by the priest-migrant from Russia, the services are held by him and two Dutch priests in Russian and Dutch languages. Languages of communication within the community are Russian, Dutch, English, as well as the native languages of community members. Old members of the community are holding visible place in the space, some of them have their habitual sitting places, they attend most of the services, some of them can volunteer for the community on the regular basis, like work in the library, translation and preparation of the materials for parish bulletin. Others, from time to time, help in technical work, mainly, under the request of administrator “starosta” who, as well as the clergy, is a volunteer. Most of the new members are practically invisible.
and have less close contacts with the core community, although, the administrator has their contact numbers.

After every Sunday liturgy the community people are welcome to coffee and tea meeting in the round room behind the big hall of Church. The aim is to have the possibility for light breakfast and communication. Everyone is invited to stay for coffee and conversation after the Sunday service has ended. People after the liturgy living in Amsterdam and other parts of the Netherlands are present, women prevail.

Coffee and tea with some biscuits are arranged by the volunteers, "starosta" (administrator of the parish) organizes volunteering. People usually pay for that 50 cents, but it is not very strict. One can ask for coffee and not pay, nobody is reminding, so, if you are a guest or simply can not pay, you can, anyway, enjoy it. As usual, people come to liturgy without having the breakfast- it is a rule- to receive after the service the small piece of prosphora- special bread consecrated and sanctified during the liturgy in altar by prayers. The possibility to have coffee and a kind of small breakfast after the service is especially comfortable for people who live outside of Amsterdam (quite big part of community)

Forty to sixty people participate- not all of the people attended liturgy stay for coffee-meeting. The oval room is furnished by united tables – near the walls of the room and round table in the centre. A big portraits of Patriarch Alexey and Bishop Simon decorate the walls with the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God in the niche between the portraits. People are sitting in small groups of 2-3 persons. The composition of groups changes, some people leave, others come later. Clergy usually come later, because they use to talk with people who stay after the liturgy to ask questions or discuss something in the big hall of church. People from the same country usually are gathering and often sitting together, sometimes speaking the language of home country. There are some people who feel more free joining different groups, involving people in communication, being in the centre of attention. Core members of community feel free to enter small kitchen near the coffee room, to stay and talk there. There is a possibility to feed the children after the service. Eritreans often serve with the home made bread. People discuss news, health, children problems.
The hierarchic structure of Orthodox Church is quite precise, but Amsterdam church differs from other churches I have been participating. I was wondering by the atmosphere of public discussion at the meeting of the community on financial issues, budget, witnessing open critics and vivid involvement of parish members in the problems of community. Few newcomers also were present. In Orthodox Church usually, the blessing of priest is the order to be executed. Here I met the situation, when people resisted or opposed the decision after the innovation- the concerts of Orthodox Spiritual music in the Church, organized by newly created foundation Blagovest and open to the general public, even despite the blessing of Archbishop.

The issues of power are discussing in the community, especially after the mentioned new initiative- the concerts in the Church open for public. Some of the members displayed dissatisfaction feeling confused and insulted that lay people were drinking wine at the icons in the main hall. Somebody considered “making money” for Church or for the new foundation by means of concert as a “betrayal of Christ for 30 silvers”- as it was rumored. Others think that the blessing of rector or Archbishop should be authorized as a rule, as it is used in the Orthodox Church. The processes of stretching truth, led to being discussed through preaching, were considered by leaders as a sign and necessity of change and the need for more open discussions. The rift in Sourozh made parishioners and clergy worried, that the same destiny can overtake Amsterdam Orthodox Church.

Gender relationships in Amsterdam church differ from those in other Orthodox Churches I’ve observed- there were no strict rules of wearing headgear for women (as a symbol of substitution to men), many women were in trousers (in the most of the Orthodox Churches women are strictly requested to attend service in “women” dressing-skirts)

During the participation in liturgy in Georgia, Russia- the principle “men first” sometimes takes grotesque forms when people are in line to venerate icon and cross. In Amsterdam church I’ve never mentioned realization of this principle. Probably, this difference reflects the influence of Dutch culture and influence of Sourozh diocese culture. In general, the position of leaders and the attitudes of core community
members to other aspects of Church life are also less restrictive in comparison with other, more "eastern" church communities. Rules of fasting "diet" are lighter, the accent is made more on spiritual component of fasting- forgiveness, prayer. People who are "travelers" can restrain from the fast.

As one of participants mentions:

*I didn’t feel that I can participate in Church life, because I didn’t feel so good for that. In my country smoking prohibition, especially for women, is very strict in Church. I was so happy, when the priest here welcomed, accepted me. I didn’t feel so sinful and started attend after the many years being here without Church life- Mary.*

Others informants also mention the differences:

"*Here, in Holland, church is different. Here is a community life. There you come to church- priest is like Minister or Tsar, here I met people who really serve God*"- Vladimir

*There I didn’t know anything, didn’t understand. Here, I learned the service, the liturgy. I understand the mistakes of my parents- nobody was teaching me.”*- Anton

"*You are choosing, when to cross, when to stand up. In US it was different way. And I like the way children are treated here- they can freely move during the service. I feel free and V. (daughter, 10 months) feels free. In Roman Catholic Church everything is strict. In our church is absence of boundaries. “*- Lina

"*Parish is international, intercultural. It is easier to communicate for people. But, main is inner freedom. Personal freedom is in the centre. I don’t know, maybe it is my own experience. For newcomers it is important.”*- Elizaveta

"*In US the relationships in the community were closer. That was one of the reasons of my decision to move.”*- Konstantin

*NB. She gave up smoking*
The time and effort are spent in keeping the community alive. Women and men spend time organizing events, sometimes, travel abroad and other gatherings that bring together, and indeed, produce the community. These women and men who are volunteers, some of whom are "professional cultural brokers" (such as priests), actively create the community. The Parish Council leading by the Rector and the administrator ("starosta") manages this creation.


"I started to attend for not to be lost abroad. There [at home country] I would not stay in Church, there are many friends, temptations around, I would not stay, would leave." — Anton

Case study. Marina is temporarily migrated from Ukraine for short term international study course two months ago. It is not her first experience with migration, she spends most time of her life last years outside of home, in Poland, where she studies, travels a lot. Thinks about future, about sedentary life, but still has not clear plans. She likes life in Amsterdam, feels more comfortable, than in home country, but lacks communications and social relationships. M. has long term experience of attending church, it is a part of her life and culture, connected with childhood and religious upbringing, strong influence of religious mother. Church for M. was always also one of the ways of socializing, making contacts, meeting people, set up relationships. "I don't like church in our district- stupid priest, poor preaching, bad quire. Oh, I'm sorry speaking this way. My mother would kill me hearing what I'm speaking about church (Laughs). I usually go to different churches- to Catholic, Orthodox, to our Uniat church. People in my confession can migrate and attend services in different churches." Church for M. was always also one of the ways of socializing, making contacts, meeting people, set up relationships. In Amsterdam Marina's social life and communications are limited, she has not much contacts with Dutch students. As usual, she applies to church in searching contacts and communication with people in mother tongue. "I go usually to church to meet people, new people. And the language is important. I have been in Catholic Church here, but service was in Dutch, people speak in Dutch. And almost no music. The language is important. I met you and remembered that I've seen you on third floor of students housing building. In the coffee room I met also two Ukrainian guys, they are illegally here, work somewhere as a builders. We spoke a bit in Ukrainian, and after that we had a walk in Amsterdam. It was nice."

After the first acquaintance with Amsterdam Church, Marina is surprised: "People talk during the service, for me, there was noisy. And people are moving during service. No, I didn't like it. Probably, I was guarded, because it is Russian Church. In spite of that she is thinking about continuing of attending Amsterdam church. Later, she mentions: I couldn't imagine that Russian Church can be so open. People communicate even during service— it is unusual for me."

"What is Church giving me? Belonging to something common, to culture, many acquaintances. You can speak Ukraine language. Service helps to pray. I like music, singing, I am not very gifted musician, but I can sing with quite, I like it. My mother was singing in a church choir. I like the

² churches that acknowledge papal authority but retain their own liturgy
service, music from the childhood. Maybe, important is that I know, church supports when you have problems, and I have a feeling of safety (in church). When you have problem, you can talk with priest, get advice- like with psychologist. Maybe, I'm not very good Christian."

In celebration of Easter Marina looks for the possibilities to do it in a habitual way (coloring eggs, buying special sort of Easter cake, prepares for Easter Eve). She has a kind of mistrust toward Russian church (in Ukraine and in Amsterdam) connected with her experience in Uniat Church, which was under the restrictions during long period of Ukraine history and current political opposition of her country to Russian influence. Talking about that, about long term conflicts between churches, Marina reveals unrest expressed in changed intonations, gestures, connected with her negative emotional experience in the past. In spite of that she is going to continue attending Amsterdam Church. She explains joining Amsterdam church as a way of coping with loneliness, solving problem of communication and socialization, respond to cultural and religious needs.

3.1. Introduction. Work on self, belonging and identity has a special place in the study of human nature, as self-concerns are arguably at the center of individuals' striving for well-being and for making sense of one's life. Life goals develop and are influenced by one's view of what one is like, the way one would ideally like to be (or would like to avoid being), as well as one's perceptions of what is feasible. Furthermore, conceptions of self and the world affect how one's progress towards these goals is monitored, evaluated, redirected, re-evaluated, and pursued again. Thus, the "self" as a construct has far-reaching implications for behavior, self-esteem, motivation, experience of emotions and the world more broadly, and hence for interpersonal relationships, society, and culture.

"Loss of pattern of conduct is intensified by the uncertainty of what kind of behaviour is acceptable or non-acceptable in their new environment..." (Taylor, Nathan in Malkki 1995: 508). Loss of homeland is linked to a presumed loss of identity and concept of adaptation in functionalists works (Malkki 1995:509)

As it was mentioned above, uprooting, social isolation, discrimination, uncertainty and even threat of forced repatriation are interfaced with the loss of a homeland, of the integrity of the body and personality, of relatives, of social networks and family structure, social status and possessions, leads to an intrusion on self-esteem, to cultural discontinuity and to a loss of sense of wholeness and belonging. (Van Dijk 2004)
3.2. Cultural bereavement and re-rooting. The experience of migration is usually the psycho-social transition analogous to bereavement. The Eisenbruch’s term cultural bereavement applies, especially, to those people who suffer a permanent loss of their land and culture as unwilling migrants, exiles and refugees, suddenly uprooted because of war and persecution (Eisenbruch, 1991: 674)

Massive social loss, such as that caused by uprooting produces grief. Marris mentions that each transition involves the anxieties of change centered on the struggle to defend or to recover a meaningful pattern of relationships (Marris in Eisenbruch 1991: 674). Eisenbruch suggested the term cultural grief in 1984, in 1991 brings up the concept of cultural bereavement – as the experience of the uprooted person or group- resulted from loss of social structures, cultural values and self identity. Studying the Cambodian refugee experience, he describes cultural bereavement as memories of family in homeland, continuing experiences from the past, visitation of spirits, dreams, clarity with which appearance or relations is recalled, the structuring of past in the homeland, personal experience of death, funerals and graves, anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger in response to separation from the homeland . And as the perceived antidotes to the person’s cultural bereavement he mentions comfort derived from religious belief and comfort from participation in religious gatherings (Eisenbruch 1991) Studying refugee adolescents in US and Australia, he founds that cultural bereavement is significantly grater in US, than in Australia, where there was less pressure to leave the old culture behind and where they were encouraged to participate in the traditional ceremonies. The adolescents felt that their painful feelings could be released by traditional beliefs and access to ritual. The ceremonies help to come to terms with these losses, make the world a safer place to them, reduce the tension between the life in “this world “ in host society and “other world”, which is internalized in the person, and consolidate their sense of self. These ceremonies are antidotes to cultural bereavement and are encoded in daily and calendrical cultural myths and rituals.

As it was mentioned by many investigators of the problem, migration is often living in betweenness that has two dualities here and there, homeland and host land, indigenousness and dispersal (Fortier 2000:72). In transition, people often experience
feelings of isolation and alienation as they attempt to define themselves in relation to the world around them.

When exiles tell their stories, they try to define the socio-cultural space in which they have lived... People have different ways of dealing with exile, loss and mourning and they have minimal positive attachments to places they passed through, but people and space seem to be inextricably (but not deterministically) connected (Van Dongen 2004: 378) As a result of betweenness exiles are entangled in a process of *membering* invisible for others, embodied spaces with spirits and souls from the past without having a space to re-member, because the places where exiles must live tend to exclude their memories from the collective process of remaking history by means of politics of amnesia (Van Dongen, 2004: 361).

*What I mean by nostalgia? A kind of romantic idealization of what does not exist.* - Vera

When Vera tells about nature, weather, describes the beauty of different seasons of the year in home country her face is lightening: *Whole the year there is so nice, I was feeling very happy when returned. Happiness – when you are grateful for what does exist.*

And as asylum seeker Lina says: *I live in limbo, this is the place between earth and sky, when you exist and at the same time don't exist.*

Facing the adversities of new life, living in betweenness, *in limbo*, can be painful, especially in case of forced migration. Van Dongen (2004: 379) suggests: the starting point for every care for those in exile or living in diaspora could be the making of a symbolic space where emotional dimensions of remembrance and ways people have found to deal with lives will be shared and talked about. “*In remembering people want to be together...*” The socio-cultural space created in Russian Christian Orthodox Church is the place, where people have the possibility to meet God and people serving God, to meet, to communicate and to set up relationships suggests not only the space for the remembrance, but the place where up-rooted people can be re-rooted. “One needs to be enrooted to spread the wings” (Van Dijk, personal communication)
"This place -Topus\(^3\)- suggests interrelationships, different languages, doesn't request the results from the process. Sometimes, people prefer to stay in Holland, to be closer to this place, to belong to this community... We organize group meetings- e.g. "Nikolskie vechera" ("Nicolas' evenings") people have the opportunity to meet, to discuss cultural events, to talk with each other. We are going to collaborate with the organization Society for Russian Culture -there will be The Integration Library- to facilitate the social integration into Dutch society, maybe, other social programmes. "- Fr. Sergey, rector of the Church.

3.3. Roots: Spiritual Home, Family, Kinship. As it was mentioned, the community of Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam was created by the group of people- among them young family of Dutch priest -slavist and his wife, also slavist worked in UvA, Russian migrant. At present the second generation is leading- their son in low- rector of the church, and daughter (the wife of rector), regent of choir- the heart, the cultural core of church community, that consists mainly of Dutch participants, falling in love with Orthodox philosophy, spiritual life, Russian musical and cultural tradition. The church community started by family at present presents a big spiritual kinship and founder family centered community.

The founder of Church Father Aleksei Voogd, deceased few years ago, invisibly is present in legends, stories about his life of Dutch spiritual hero- creator and promoter of Russian Orthodox tradition with love to Russian language and culture. I have been told the story about the wonderful weather, birds coming and singing, and other signs of his sacred life, feat and deed. His wife-T.F. represents currently the older generation and is personified as a Grandmother, during the liturgy she usually looks for he younger grandchildren (the fourth generation) and her, sometimes, strict remarks in respect to rules in the Church or "old times" are treated with respect.

Diaspora literature discusses the definitions of home and nation. "To go home is to go where one belongs. But is it?" (Malkki, 1995: 509). "Home is where your feet are, and may your heart be too"(Parameswaran in van Dongen, 2004:379).

\(^3\) Spot, locality (Greek)
The themes of the Home and the Family are traced in the most of the interviews, I am presenting below the quotes, giving the voice to the informants.

"Home is the point where you return. Of course many things depend on people. The difference is that I can not forgive to Holland what I would forgive to my country." - Vera.

"Our Uzbekistan- our drown town Kitezh- it doesn’t exist, my schoolmates are in Sweden, in US. There is nothing, there stayed only our dreams." - Lyudmila

"What kind of problems are in the first years of migration- loss of family and love. Here – brothers and sisters. The experience of home is lost. Stays only the feeling of comfort. In past I wanted to have a house, a comfort. Now- only cleanness does matter. This church is a Home for Strangers. Even the only atmosphere here - when you came in-everything is native, home. When we were gardening in church yard, we discussed how children when grown up will remember how beautiful was the grass. Our Orthodox Home… You know the Russian saying "One who doesn’t have Church as a Mother, doesn’t have God as a Father". If I will come again [to the Netherlands], I will come here- to my brothers, my sisters. We don’t contact often, but when contact-there is a feeling of knowing each other for a long time- of course we are boiling in the same liquid." - Vladimir

"Church is giving me feeling of home. And, a sense of community-physical, psychological presence together. I don’t know anymore where is Home for me. Bulgaria I still call home, because of memories and family. I never say I’m going home, when I go to US. I never felt US is home. Home is people, experience. Maybe if I would have family here-it would be home? And if nobody would stay in Bulgaria- I don’t know, memories make the place the home." - Konstantin

"Church is like family. Not real mother- the figure of Mother. Family will not give you up. Church is a Home, an Apartment, a Family. We meet once a week. It is a Family, because we share same feelings. But there is no cohesion. People hide the details, names. Some of them are in procedure. I like in Church the history. The beautiful history of Jesus Christ. We are like-minded. I like him as a Father" - Lina
"A. (the wife of the rector) is like my mother, I found many similar features." - Vera

Our common needs, aspirations and realizations of God's benevolence are united with our prayer, and as one family we acknowledge God as our Father. - Rosa

The Orthodox people in Amsterdam Church—Dutch, Russian, Serbian, English, American, Eritrean, etc. — form a sort of family connected by ties that prevail over the origin. People know each other by name. They celebrate the feasts together. The relationships include those who were not even present. During the Liturgy prayers are said for both the living and the dead. People write down the names of loved ones (being alive or already deceased) on special slips of paper. All these names are read one by one by the priest. When the Orthodox goes up to receive Communion, (s)he is addressed by name. That applies even to the youngest child, because children, even babies and toddlers, receive Communion. In fact, they are the first to receive it, immediately after the priest. Man is constantly being told: I exist and I belong here, I belong to God and to a real community.

Fortier (2000) discussing the role of family and "familism" in British-Italian émigré culture argues that the family trope is a site of construction of the very boundary between self and other. Family is the organizing figure of a dispersed yet localized "community". It is perhaps the organizing principle of the community's history, but it is also the antithesis of national (and cultural) history and geography. Within this distinctly post-national historicity, the family displaces the nation as the site and frame of memory of émigré culture. Family in emigration acquires a particular status that combines competing ideas of settlement and displacement, stability and disruption, continuity and change. “Emigration simultaneously menaces and enforces the idealized unity of the family, while the family becomes a key unifying factor that operates against the disruptive forces of emigration... The family provides the vocabulary to speak of cultural identity and local particularism in terms of nurturance, fixed gender roles and generational responsibility.” Fortier (2000:63-4)

4 Formula of communion: The servant of God (name) receives the body and blood of our Lord, and God, and Saviour Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and life eternal.
The links between people in Amsterdam Church are strengthened by baptizing children, witnessing of wedding ceremonies. The news in parish life are publishing in the bulletin "Parish news" highlighting, among others, family news of parish members- births, marriages, christenings, names of deceased fellow parishioners or their family members. The parish News bulletin publishes also the news of other Christian churches and monasteries, life of Orthodox Christians of other countries, conferences, announces the events- like meetings, concerts, round tables. Every Thursday on 11.30 the members of parish gather without the priest to pray and read The Akafist- the prayer devoted to Mary, God-bearer or to Saint Nicolas of Mira who is the patron and protector of Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam. After the prayer people who attend sometimes stay for sharing feelings, news, discuss last events in Church or private lives, reading.

3.4. Routes: Belonging and Identity. Thus, the church becomes a place to call home, a space of familiarity that joins people in the metaphysical realm of "fraternal" kinship as children of God. This is belonging to spiritual family and multiethnic kinship of Christ that unites ordinary alive people, deceased ancestors, saints from various ethnic origin, priests, community leaders. This is belonging that is at the same time both local (being Orthodox in a non Orthodox world) and global (being part of the world community of Orthodox Christians)

Fortier in "Migrants belongings" discusses the role of communities of émigré churches for enhancing and reproducing ethnic religious practices, reinforcing the sense of belonging to and inheritance of, a particular ethnic background. She examines how the manufacturing of this identity entails the shaping of physical spaces into mirrors of Who we are. (Fortier, 2000:110)

From the very childhood I remember this question- what is your nationality? I remember this feeling of shame and blush when the teacher in school was asking. I look like Jew, and my strange (Jewish) family name (though we were re-listed as Russians). My family name is from the members of nobility, we were baptized long time ago, were at the royal court, my grandmother was the rector of catholic monastel. And all of us were
baptized in 1990 in Pushkino. We are salving here by her prayers. I started to attend church in Russia - it was Baptist –evangelistic church (prohibited that time). To the Orthodox Church I came in Holland, in 2002. If I would come to Orthodoxy in Russia- I would never leave Russia.- Lyudmila

Belonging as an affiliation to people, groups, modes of being was explored for the analysis of cultural identity of informants.

Probin (1996:153) defines belonging as a desire for some sort of attachment- to other people, places or mode of being. Inquiring the nature of belonging Probin makes the emphasis on going rather than being, positions the self as a point of departure rather than origin, a productive zone rather than a site of lack, asking not where desires comes from but where it goes in journeys and destinations. She argues against the idea of identity, because it can describe only specificities of categories of belonging: it cannot reach the desires to belong and the ways in which individuals move to reach it. She considers having an identity as an impossible idea, it [identity] Is something that nevertheless circulates as a feasible goal and increasingly as evident fact (Probin 1996:71). Any singularity of belonging must continually be freed and encouraged in its movement to constantly become other.

Membering and remembering personal history in Amsterdam church community are shaped with the history of life of Christ repeating in yearly cycle of religious life, the celebration of Resurrection every Sunday with an active participation in the psychodrama of divine liturgy with the group of people sharing common believes (brothers and sisters of many ethnic background, Eastern and Western –European, African and American) in surroundings of icons representing saints, who are considered alive role models, helpers and mediators, direct communication with God- Man and God-Father and Mary, God- Bearer, The Mother- the helper , patroness and intercessor. All this creates for the Orthodox Christian the virtual space of spiritual family and kinship they belong to.

Entailing the shaping of physical spaces, images, languages, Orthodox textual and musical heritage of different countries, this place, Amsterdam Orthodox Christian Home
does not so much reinforces the sense of belonging to and inheritance of, a particular ethnic background, but reinforces the sense of belonging to Orthodox Christian culture and facilitates the construction of Christian Orthodox identity, at the same time, giving the possibility to remain "ethnic".

On the other hand, the presence of Dutch language, Dutch Christian Orthodox cultural heritage, Dutch priests and deans (leaders and teachers), readers, participants of choir, Dutch members of parish, symbolic presence of Dutch founder of Church, worship to Dutch saints\(^5\) - first missionaries, creates the symbolic space enhancing the sense of cohesion with host country and facilitating the socio-psychological, socio-cultural transition process for the newcomers to the country, while leaving the possibility to pray and to communicate in the native languages, and remain ethnic in the process of manufacturing of new identity in host country. It enhances the sense of sharing common cultural heritage with Dutch population, and the belonging to common roots, softens the sense of cultural difference with a larger "pragmatic" and "materialist" society for the old members of the community, long time migrants, in spite of existing distance between autochtone, native Dutch and "non-Dutch", Eastern European groups within the community. Participating in the restoration of a society's heritage and culture helps to restore a sense of collective identity (Silove, 2004:47). Most of participants-migrants lack this opportunity outside of community.

Dutch community in the Church, therefore, can be considered as one of the bridges to the larger society, which can widen the social networks of migrants and increase their adaptational possibilities, though this potential is not currently fully realized.

As Fortier notes, emigration is the basis of a new cultural terrain located between localism and transnationalism. New webs of belonging trouble spatial fields of nation, "home", and community: tensions between here and there; majority and minority; continuity and change (Fortier 2000: 157)

\(^5\) Saints Willibrord, Bonifatius, Servatius, Alberich, Frederich, Hunger, Radboud, Ansfriid, Bernold, Kunera, Engelmoed, Grigiri, Gertruda, Halinda, Renilda, Verenfrid, Villehad, Adelbert, Armand are glorified in the hymns of the choir
"First, I am a Christian, second- Orthodox, and third- Russian (or Ukrainian, or Georgian- ethnic)" - Father Sergey (Ovsyannikov). This is shared by lay members of the community.

"The parish founded on the basis of nationality will be destroyed. There will be hypocrisy (‘we are better, higher’), Christianity will be slit out. Nationality doesn’t determine conscience. Although, I’m Ukrainian, I think in Ukrainian."- Vladimir

"My spirit belongs to God, my heart belongs to Georgia. I’m Christian first, and than- Georgian. I pray for and remember my ancestors here, in Holland. I pray in Georgian, my prayer book is in Georgian."- Vazha

"Who am I? I am Azeri of new era. My people are not like me. I’d like to see them more open, more understanding. But they stayed chauvinistic. Russians were always closer to me. I am Russian-speaking Azeri. And our place in Azerbaijan was close to Georgia, my mother spoke a bit Georgian."- Lina

Van der Veer (2002:95) suggests that religious movements, active among migrants, develop cosmopolitan projects that can be viewed as alternatives to the cosmopolitanism of the European Enlightenment. This raises a number of challenges concerning citizenship, integration and political loyalty for governmentality in the nation-states in which these cosmopolitan projects are carried out.

Probin (1996:40-41) tries to embody certain relations of belonging, the desires that move people in different times and different ways to engage. Fundamentally, it is the engagement with where I live and how I wish to be able to live. A wish that is for alternative relations of sociality, of thought, of friendship, of practice, of success. She mentions that the processes of belonging are always tainted with deep insecurities about the possibility of truly fitting in. Belonging is inbetween stated while belonging may make one think of arriving, it also marks the often fearsome interstices of being and doing.
Belonging as it operates in Probin’s work is useful because it displaces identity from its foundational status. Probin (1996:19) emphasizes the quivery character of identity. Identity as a threshold, a location that by definition frames the passage from one space to another; identity as a transition, always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming.

Fortier (2000:2) approaches the institutional narratives of identity as part of longing to belong, as constituted by desire for identity, rather than surfacing from an already constituted identity. She approaches migrant belongings as constituted through both movements and attachment. Without neglecting the constitutive potency of movement in the formation of physical and symbolic locations of belonging, Fortier examines the new formations that emerge from deterritorialization and reterritorialization, and that are rooted, even momentarily, in a place. At the same time she destabilizes assumptions of sameness and universality that are often enclosed within models that naturalize boundaries as mechanisms of homogenization. *Included in the formation of belonging, then, is identity as a momentary positionality which is always already becoming* (Hall in Fortier 2000:2).

Identities are constructed- not by impersonal historical or social forces but by human individuals within particular social and historical conditions and constellations. These individuals also have to deal with the pluralities of differences in which they are suspended or, in other words, with the pluralities of identities they assume or are ascribed in particular moments.

Combination of Eastern and Western features, European and Asian, or African or American, styles of behaviour, languages Threshold of East and West, alive and deceased, old and new, Dutch and non-Dutch, ethnic Russian and native Dutch in Russian Orthodox Church makes this place a kind of shelter and bridge from home to the host country and to the Heaven Homeland, helping in retaining roots and designing routes to migrant identities.
Belonging to the community, to the social network of its members and living the life of Amsterdam Christian Orthodox Church creates the sense of structure in life of people many of whom have not permanent job, relatives or close friends in the Netherlands. Participation in the Church activities reduces uncertainty in state of inbetweenness. "The only homeland Orthodox Christian has- is his spiritual, Heaven Homeland" - Deacon Hildo

The Homeland in Heaven (nebesnaya rodina)- the point of arrival and desire to belong helps to obtain the internal locus of control and the ability to influence events using the support of virtual transnational spiritual Family and Kinship.

4. Resilience.

Case study. Vera is 30 years old, studies and works in the Netherlands. She was grown up in Ukraine, in the family of Christians with different confessional affiliation and different ethnic origin, caring and controlling. Father was "staroobiade" (old-believer), everyday read Bible, but didn't attend church. Mother was singing in Orthodox church choir, it was a secret from family members. Vera attended church in Ukraine, but rarely. After the death of mother, with the older sister she moved to the Netherlands with the sister for study. "Our parents wanted us to leave at the West thinking that there is no perspective for daughters in Ukraine. Everything was destroying. My father called me 'bomf', because I had my own life and lived separately. "During the first four years period of life in the Netherlands V. sometimes attended Russian Orthodox Church without participation in liturgy services, confessions and Church community life. "Even attending church here that time, I was formally listening preaching, formally attending". She returns to home country after the rude letter from supervisor. "I hated Holland, hated Hollanders. I could not forgive to Holland what I would forgive to Ukraine." After returning to home country, in search of meaning Vera returns to Church. In 2001 I confessed in Church in Kiev, and then I started to recover. For me, the only acceptable Church in Ukraine was always one that substitutes to Moscow Patriarchate, because I believe, there is a continuity with the first Christians, Apostles in the communion".

"I felt guilty when not working for them. I hated people who missed me in that, my relatives, others, former friends. No privacy, because I lived in their [NGO] apartment, everybody could come anytime, they were demanding. Now I understand, it was a kind of totalitarian sect and I fall in dependency. My sister called from UK asking me to go to Church, to confess. In 2001 I confessed in Church in Kiev, and then I started to recover. For me, the only acceptable Church in Ukraine was always one that substitutes to Moscow Patriarchate, because I believe, there is a continuity with the first Christians, Apostles in the communion".

After the return to Amsterdam in 2003 she participates in the services of Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam. Church community life, starts to sing in choir, volunteers making prosphoras. Remembers time when came to Amsterdam Church in a long skirt, with a headgear, "like a nuns". Father Sergey called me "Matushka Rus" - Mother Russia (Laughs). Here the church is different, more earthly. It needs more commitment. But being in Church you trust more. You know that it's truth. It was not easy to adjust, I used to ask the priest what is better to do, how to behave. Here Father Sergey usually says 'you know better all the circumstances, you can decide better, I can not decide instead of you'. Tells about the crisis, when she was informed that her father in Ukraine had cancer. Remembers how Father Sergey suggested, that she should necessarily go home, and gave her money for going to Ukraine. "I was able to take care of my dying father, read Bible for him, to stay with him until his death. I'm so thankful for that. Here I have people around me I trust and who love me, people who can help me when I am in danger or sick, people who support me with information and advice when I need it. In fact, the social support from church is

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6 religious dissenters who refused to accept the liturgical reforms imposed upon the Russian Orthodox Church by the patriarch of Moscow Nikon (1652–58).

7 abbreviation, person without definite place of living, in Russia "street" people)

8 Prosphora (Greek for "offering") is bread prepared for use in the Divine Liturgy
relationships in everyday life, after the liturgy. We had good company together, after liturgy we played soccer, had picnics. If you need money- there are people you can apply. If I need new housing- I ask guys. They can help to organize.

Vera has many friends outside of Church community, explains, that they sometimes share values unacceptable from her point of view. “For example, it is strange for me when the mother of two children, having been in marriage ten years discusses the sexual relationships with lover in group, and it is accepted as normal by these people.” Church in Amsterdam is giving Vera the sense of affiliation “in truth” to the group of people who trust and love her, and whom she can apply in case of trouble. “It is difficult to explain, people from outside don’t know and don’t understand the processes you are undergoing. I had a feeling at the end of the fast – I wanted to keep the hands of others (in the community), wanted to embrace them. Because, only they feel same, they can understand, because they are going through the same process, same difficulties. Having them around makes it easier. And at the end, you celebrate together and share the joy.”

“There are not too much positive things in life here [in Holland], maybe that is after the deaths of parents. I’ve already get accustomed to these permanent changes, over-falls. Your mood and feelings depend, e.g. on if you feel seek, are ill- everything is becoming worse. Or, if money is finished. But Church is dragging you out, pulling out, saying look- stay here, withstand and everything will be fine.”

Vera is respected and treated by love and trust by the community members, she is friendly, always is ready to help. She is valued by the Church community and has opportunities to contribute to others, to apply her professional knowledge in skills in music and arts management as a manager of newly created foundation for development of Russian Orthodox Musical Culture, has the constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities. She was awarded by certificate of good work by Archbishop of Brussels Simon during his visit. Vera is given useful functions in the community, she places high value on helping other people and is optimistic about her personal future. Vera is sure that she has a strong perspective for success in case if she will stay here.

Being informed that her stay in Holland was prolonged for the last time, meets it quietly- although, at the same time she has to find new housing solution within the very restricted budget. “I’ve already decided to leave all the stuff, and simply go out from this room. I can leave at N. (community member) flat, she suggested.” But soon finds appropriate housing through another community member. “I am needed here, that is important. And now I obtained the perspective- that’s difference between my first 4 years period of life in Amsterdam and current period. Every time when I faced the problem- I escaped, even physically, from the situation. I know, that is my problem. And I’m changed. I withstand better, stronger. Even when there is no clear of vision of future- I am already adjusted with this permanent uncertainty.”

4.1. Introduction. Migration, as a process of change can be considered as a process of psychosocial transition and can be compared with the developmental crises. The research on good practices in the mental health of refugees shows they may be seen as being governed by ‘clinical’ and the ‘psychosocial work’ paradigms. The individual as victim and patient has been the focal point for intervention in work with refugees, with just a few agencies working at the community level in an effort to restore social structures and a sense of normalcy. But there is no essential separation between the individual and the social, for one cannot become an individual without becoming social. Consequently, the social construction of human experience is one powerful source of differentiation between individuals in terms of behaviour, thinking, adaptation and responses to adversity.
What factors contribute to resilient outcomes in the face of stressors such as violence, displacement and loss? Many people who are exposed to so called, risk factors do not display psychosocial problems. Protective factors appeared to account for this phenomenon are often described in terms of resilience (or resiliency)—the ability to recover strength and spirit under adversity on both internal (self) and external (family, community) factors. Like risk factors, protective factors may be strengthened through interaction with other factors. Individual protective factors include having a more positive view of one's life circumstances and ability to affect those around them, as well as stress-reducing strategies.

Researchers point out that protective factors, or "buffers", appear to have a more significant impact on the lives of children and youth who experience adverse conditions than particular risk factors or traumatic situations (Boyden 2002, electronic source). Many researchers suggest the emphasizing protective elements may bring about greater benefits. A review and synthesis of research findings identifies the centrality of core protective factors. One of the fundamental protective factors encompasses people having rich opportunities for active participation and meaningful contributions to family, friends, and community life. Creating opportunities for meaningful participation in engaging and challenging activities in order to make life better for others is likely to be a natural byproduct of relationships that are grounded in caring and characterized by high expectations.

The definitions of resilience discussed in Chapter I have practical implications and show that people who are exposed to chronic or severe stress will turn out competent, these people will successfully adapt over time. These people will need tremendous biological, psychological, and environmental resources in order to do this. They need love, care, and support not only from the community leaders but from other community members as well. People who have studied resilience have come to understand that it is not a superhuman quality reserved for a few individuals, or linked to a specific gene or personality trait. Instead, resilience can best be appreciated as an innate human ability that cuts across class, ethnicity, and nations. The fact that resilience can be stimulated, coaxed, and called forth through specific actions for all migrants, and especially those in tough situations, brings the power of hope, possibility, and optimism. Paying attention to
Resilience is vital because it helps to overcome unfortunate circumstances and difficult odds.

4.2. Resilience is contextual. The individual characteristics and environmental factors that lead to resilience in one context may not lead to resilience in another. For instance, academic resilience may be related to a certain set of individual characteristics and environmental factors. However, these same factors and characteristics may not equal emotional resilience. Different kinds of resilience are related to different kinds of support. Resilience is being competent despite exposure to severe or chronic adversities. This may seem simple at first, but it is not. This is because competence changes over time. Competence is measured by developmental milestones that change over time. The definition of competence for a baby is not the same as the definition of competence for an adult. A baby need only cry in a manner which gets its needs met. An adult needs to find a means of financial support, intimate relationships, and a manner for giving back to society. Therefore, a person may display resilience in one phase of development and not in another. It is not a discrete quality that people either possess or do not possess, people may be more or less resilient at different points in their lives depending on a range of factors. Resilience cannot be seen as a fixed attribute of the individual, if circumstances change, the risk alters.

Context-related factors involve the situation a person lives in, complications in terms of other problematic events or situations, and social resources. This last item has been investigated in the field of social support and network-research.

4.3. Resilience is complex. Resilience is not a simple concept, but rather involves the complex and dynamic interplay between individual attributes and the broader environment. It takes personal characteristics such as social skills and environmental factors such as mentoring to create the resilience phenomenon. Resilience does not just come from the person. Additionally, it draws on biological (temperament) and psychological (internal locus of control) characteristics of the person. Environmental factors also come into play- people, opportunities, and atmospheres all add to the resilience equation. A resilient personality is not sufficient. It takes the person and his or her environment, the way how the environment will be developed is important to the
well-being. The results of international resilience research project show that the most frequently used resilience factors or features were these: from external supports and resources — trusting relationships, structure and rules at home, parental encouragement of autonomy, and role model; from internal, personal strengths, — sense of being lovable, autonomy, self-esteem, hope and faith and trust, and locus of control; from social, interpersonal skills — communication, problem solving, and impulse control.

4.4. Resilience can often be accompanied by emotional difficulties. Great sacrifice is made and pain is endured for a person to display resilience. Resilient people face tremendous stress and adversity and it is often accompanied by emotional difficulties. There can be also stress related health problems. Resilience, competence despite severe or chronic adversity, has a cost (emotional problems and health problems). However, the accomplishments that accompany resilience can not be overestimated. Creating healthy places and spaces for overcoming unfortunate circumstances and difficult odds can be critical in this process.

When I came to this church for the first time, it was as I was first time in Church. At the liturgy I felt seek, was falling in darkness... Then the wind started...I couldn't stand up to and bear, but I understood what was happening... I fall down, people tried to hold me up, gave me the holy water, explained that it happens. Next Sunday it was repeated, but was much easier. Three Sundays, it was as "purification"

On examining the literature, there is a good deal of agreement on what the factors or features of resilience consist of, but recognizing features of resilience did not mean there was agreement on how to define it. The problem of defining resilience as a construct may not be for lack of agreement on many of the factors and characteristics of resilience; rather, the problem may be more related to the dynamic interaction of the resilience factors, and the sources of resilience factors; e.g., internal/external; resources/skills.

4.5. Contribution of Amsterdam Orthodox Church community to resilience
Models of dealing and coping with stressful situation, old strategies of conflict resolution often do not work or their effect is considered as ineffective. In attempts to obtain or return the control over their lives situation people apply to God and often come to Church in times of loneliness, despair, suffering, need of support or seeking the answer the questions: Who we are and why we are here?

Resilience plays an important role in shaping people's response to problems in their lives. Individuals lacking in resilience are more likely to have feelings of hopelessness and, sometimes, believe that suicide is the only available option. "If not this Church and place here, I would hang myself long time ago"—said one of the participants in private discussion (64 years female from Russia).

*Church is giving strength. Is giving patience. The Hope.* – Konstantin

All of informants revealed the positive construction of future—a hope and optimism Everything will be all right. I am sure. God is with me, what can happen bad? (George, asylum seeker).

The role of positive psychological constructs such as optimism, hopefulness, forgiveness, spirituality/religiosity, and meaning making that may contribute to resilience is discussing in the literature. And resilience is the human capacity not only to face, overcome, but even be strengthened by the adversities of life. This is the phenomenon of maintaining adaptive functioning in spite of serious risk hazards.

When describing the feelings at first period of living in Holland one of the informants said “It was terrible. I didn’t understand language. I didn’t understand anything. When hearing Russian speech at the street I was running to this person. I felt cut from the world. It was the feeling, that you are so rightless, oppressed. You are nothing, nobody here, they don’t want even speak with you. Nightmare. Money is finishing and no work. But I was seeing- others, like me- are living here”. - Anton

*Church is helping to stay, not to fall. Church helps to retain spirituality, to build a way, to retain the Oneness, the Wholeness of man. Migration affects this Wholeness. But*
migration is not negative process (at least not always). It can be the process of purification, growth, becoming better. –Father Sergey, rector of the Church

In few cases women mentioned they were receiving antidepressants in the past. This is a problem here. It easy to seat on antidepressants, but as soon as you withdraw- you could not withdraw completely...It was after divorce. I was crying, crying, crying... had headaches, breakdowns of mood- maybe, from sadness. I tried several times, but could not deal. Then, I asked for help an icon- let me withdraw from antidepressants. And I was able to quit next day. It happens, because, you know the power of prayer and because God is hearing us. It [the problem] will come to throat, but not upper your head- because everybody is given up to his strengths.-Lyudmila

Making sense of suffering. Process of Meaning attribution reveals the attitude to adversities a learning environment, weaknesses as opportunities for development and salvation, strengths as talents given by God that should be realized and applied, satisfaction by life -thanks giving to God for every day, even for troubles as a lessons that can be learned. Assimilation and appreciation of past experience is shaped with the patterns of positive emotional experience of present and positive construction of future.

"All this was from Me"- all- that we are in Holland, that I got married this guy –with his flowers and emotions- and now am divorced having my children to raise."-Lyudmila

I have a tremendous baggage of experience in dealing with troubles, this experience is not buried-it is a part of me .With this baggage I can live everywhere.- Victor

Patterning the repeated states of positive emotional experience on Sundays, after the communion (at least once per month) strengthens resilience.

During liturgy, after the liturgy- I feel very well, peace, joy, nothing is disturbing. No will to have more. I'm dependent on communion, as drug addicted is looking for "joy", or somebody for cup of tea. This is the healthiest of stimulators. After the sadness the optimism appears. Periods of sadness, inner struggle, after the communion - joy-1-2
days, than again, after saying to F. Sergey- it becomes easier. Life without care in our world is a dream of uneducated people. - Vladimir

In fact, every Sunday it is the celebration of resurrection of Christ, victory on evil, and hope. People congratulate and each other celebration and greet with feast (“s prazdnikom”) instead of saying “hello”. At the end of each Sunday service the priest gently greets every person “s prazdnikom” naming most of them name. Lay people and priests often greet each other kissing. People are re-burned with Christ and re-charged.

“Here in church I see many people in trouble, but they smile. They are smiling and trying to preserve having no right focus. Community is more open-minded. Flexible. Spiritual maturity. Yes, everywhere is struggle. But struggle sometimes becomes masochistic. Even suffering should be right way. Martyrs have been suffering but enjoying life, they had real presence of joy. The greatest heretic in Christianity is a joyless Christian”. – Konstantin

The satisfaction by life and feeling of safety is important as a component of resilience. Many of community members interviewed speak about feeling of safety, and it is not only the possibility to get support being in danger. For some of them it is also feeling of trust in relationships. As Elizaveta explains- “you have no fear here. Usually there is the border, the wall where you do not allow other to cross. Here these boundaries are wider. You allow other to cross deeper inside.” - Elizaveta

I don’t know if I am satisfied by living here. You teach yourself to say “Thanks to God for everything.” This is your life lesson- all the mistakes you do – you should learn lessons from those. We are here (in this world) only for a period of time for the life lessons. God is giving you problem- resolve it. There were many problems in my life solved by God. You can start hate, be scared- but stick you teeth- and go ahead. – Lyudmila.

The attribution of meaning is not individual process, the meanings are discussing, negotiating through the interactions with the members of Family.
**Competence and self-efficacy.** In a cultural approach competence is understood not as a psychological property of an individual but as a relational constitution or attribution that is socially constructed and negotiated. Agency is not a given, it can be seen as an 'effect' created through alliances i.e. through connections and networks involving humans, texts, material artefacts and contexts of power and social positioning that agent are enabled or hindered in exercising influence and change ex.

The recognition of the member of community as individual agent and as collective agent, the notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of information, uncertainty, and the other constraints that exist. Many of informants underline that in Amsterdam Church clergy avoid giving direct advices, stress and facilitate the personal responsibility, autonomy and competence during counseling process.

"During the confession he [priest] was used to remind me 'don't look at me, tell to God'. I was surprised, when I was confessing to Dutch priest, we agreed that he will be not listening my confession but praying in parallel to my words". -Nina

The social actors in the community of Amsterdam Orthodox Church are considered as knowledgeable and capable. They attempt to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them and monitor continuously their own actions, observing how others react to their behaviour and taking note of various contingent circumstances.

Totman (1979:176-7) in his “Social Causes of Illness” states, that the ideal situation is where an individual is habitually outputting actions (in performance or public endorsement) which on testing against his system of rules result in a high proportion of good matches, and the minimum of modification. It means constant, solid, habitual social, behaviour, probably, sense of personal identity and worth. The likelihood of symptoms appearing is increased in the absence of frequent registrations of consistency. It happens in the situation in which radical changes of rules is necessary before
consistency is achieved and can lead to inconstant, fitful, uncertain social behaviour, sense of personal ineffectiveness, alienation, loss of “identity”

Researchers reveal major categories of traits within individuals that help make them to be resilient. Among them are autonomy, which is constructed as a strong sense of identity and worth; self-esteem and self-efficacy, self-discipline, the ability to act independently, The ability to separate, or engage in "creative distancing" from dysfunctional environments and situations, resistance. The role of stable belief system, sense of usefulness/belonging to community, sense of purpose and future (special interest, goal directedness, educational aspirations, hopefulness, belief in a compelling, attainable future are underlined.

People in Church community believe that God, Creator and Man God is invisibly present here. It gives the hope and power, the power not only to deal but to change myself and the world. Presence of Him, mentoring of people like Him, support of people like Him gives the sense of ability to learn, to survive, to help others, to enjoy life, to deal with problems, to reach goals, to win.

I work in journal, try myself in different directions- you can do it because there is no formal structure. The boundaries are transparent, you can try yourself in different roles. It is valuable for you and brings benefits to parish- Elizaveta

Though, not all the participants agree with that. As one of community core members said: I can't feel happy, because I'm not realized. I had quite high social position, good job there [at home country]. The possibility to do some work for Church is important for me. But it is only once a week. It's not sufficient. I'd like to do more, I know I can do more. (60 years old female from Ukraine, personal communication)

Purposeful activity (with meaning of social behaviour) is any actively followed pursuit with an end product (or goal) which is valued and upheld by a group of people (Totman 1979: 178. In religion- helping others is purpose. But for migrants in uncertainty- helping is a social behaviour which can lead to a sense of self-effectiveness. It means,
that helping process itself is contributing to the perception of self-efficacy, and, hence to the strengthening of resilience.

_Social support._

_The way to God lies through love of other people and there is no other way. At the Last Judgment I shall not be asked if I was successful in my ascetic exercises or how many prostrations I made in the course of my prayers. I shall be asked, did I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoners: that is all I shall be asked._

Mother Maria Skobcova of Paris, a martyr, died in 1945 in a German concentration camp.

I was told the story of the nun Mother Maria Skobcova and priest Dimitry Klepinin helping Jews in France to avoid concentration camp by signing the false documents on their christening. Both of them are canonized by Russian Orthodox Church as saints. The granddaughter of Father Dimitry, Tatiana migrated from France after the marriage with Dutch Deacon of the Amsterdam Church Hildo Bos, tells with respect about liberal values of Mother Maria and her life. I was also told a story about the group “Miracle” helping migrants, legal or illegal, to get a job. Founder of group, Dutch member of the community underlines: _Main is even not the job- the relationships. It starts with relationships of two people and becomes the relationships of a group [community]. Or relationships start with work- and then become the relationships in the parish._ -Peter Summerfield cites community support as a major protective factor, in terms of providing mutual support and solutions to problems (Summerfield, 2000: 2).

People in Church usually were surprised when I was asking about available social support in the Church. Some of them tried to explain me that “_Church is not for the social support and material aid_”, mentioned with disapprobation, that some people having no idea about Christian life and what for is the Church, come to get benefits in Church, like hiring cheap workers, or getting material aid.
The availability of work and other meaningful activities is critical to the goal of recreation of sense of purpose and identity for most persons. In the community of Russian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam there exists a limited opportunity to find, at least, lower paid work for the migrants having no legal status. In comparison with other confessions the Orthodox Church is known as proving less and limited social programmes, than others, in particular Roman Catholic Church. The necessity to strengthen and widen social support was verbalized not long time ago by religious leaders of countries, where the social situation was worsened during last decades.

*Here you can ask for information, you can place the request for help, job, housing or whatever, on the board in Church, sometimes, it works.* - Rosa

*The trust is helping and not people. Here I found trust. Here I found God.* - George

But the same person in the same interview later says: *Here are people who help with advice. One who is serving God is not indifferent to the destiny of other man. These people advice what to do, whom to apply, where to find job.* - George

Thus, as Lyudmila said, *God is helping through other people.*

*“Relationships- after the liturgy and in everyday life“ are mentioned by Vera and some others as a social support in Church community. This thrust to “relationships" is very common for migrants from Eastern European countries in the Netherlands.*

Unlike the Western style of certain distance in relationships, almost in all the countries where my informants came from, the society is more closed and the intensity of human relationships is higher. Migrants suffer from this “lack of relationships" and community is giving the possibility to have the communications in a way habitual for them. More of that, shared system of values and sense of belonging to one common virtual space make the communication deeper.

*Ordinary conversation in “mir” (secular world) can be interchange of cliche phrases. But here it can be one minute conversation of Live people.* - Elizaveta
We don't contact each other often, but when contact - there is a feeling of knowing each other for a long time - of course we are boiling in the same liquid. - Vladimir

When you communicate with people from Church it is different, I have a lot of friends outside, here, the contact is deeper, because of the shared beliefs. You don't need to explain and to prove who are you. - Konstantin

The widening of the network of social relationships is proved as strengthening the adaptational possibilities. Good relationships with family members, friends, or others are important, accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience.

The International Resilience Project ( describes the external component of resilience as follows, using the construct "I have": I have people around me I trust and who love me, people who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble, people who show me how to do things right by the way they do things, people who want me to learn to do things on the own, people who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn, people who support me with information and advice when I need it.

Participation in a meaningful social context is empowering. And the interplay of protective factors like perceived availability and actual social support, mentoring, presence of caring Adults, sense of belonging to positive social group, feeling of safety – all this contributes to the strengthening the coping abilities when facing adversities of life. Receiving support gives meaning to individuals' lives by virtue of motivating them to be attached to these ties. Being embedded in a positive social world might be more powerful than receiving help (Rook, Schvarzer & Leppin in Kamperman, 2005:27). In Orthodox Christian tradition the social services for the members (as well as for the larger population in need) still stay underdeveloped, especially in the comparison with many other Christian confessions. The demand for social services in the populations of countries of Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, as well as in émigré churches communities, exists. The development of social services is realized as a necessity by the leaders of Orthodox Christian Churches not a long time ago. In the community of
Christian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam members sometimes apply and receive the information, like the address of lawyer, information about available job, housing, help in relocation, transportation, translation etc. necessary for the problem-solving coping, can get emotional support, friendly advice. Although, this type of help is not perceived by participants as a social support and they understand the social support more in terms of material supplies (which sporadically also can be available in critical situations). Social support, an interactive process, refers to the function and quality of social relationships, such as perceived availability of help or support actually received (Schvarzer & Leppin, 1991 in Kamperman, 2005:112). The mobilization of social support can be understood as coping. At the same time, as it was stated, the perceived level of social support plays, sometimes, more important role in the empowerment, than support actually received.

Programmatic social support exists in fact only in form of availability of summer camps for the children of parish members and support of children- victims of Beslan terrorist action.

_Usually we don't distribute financial help. Every fast we gather money and send help to other countries, e.g. once, we sent to one nongovernmental organization more than 4000 EUR. We support the children- victims of Beslan terrorist action. Parish council discusses letters, sends answers- no one letter stays without answer. We visit prisons._ - Vazha

_What I would like to see here to be changed? To be more as a standpoint- helping people in need. We can not exploit, can survive only helping people._ - Vladimir

**Fasting as a resilience training.** Fast process symbolizes following Christ's way to Crucifixion and Resurrection. The period of fast is considered as the period of working

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9 There are four major fasts in Orthodox Christianity- The Great fast of 49 days, before the Easter that is the most well-known and following by the Orthodox Christian who is the member of Church. The two weeks fast before the Uspenie of Holy Virgin, when according to the legend she was taken by Son to Heaven, the fast before the Apostols' Peter and Paul Day and the fast before Christmas (part of the Orthodox Churches including Russian Orthodox Church stay in frames of the old calendar that differs for two weeks from contemporary secular calendar). It means, that Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on January, 7 and during the period when all other part of Christian (and not only) world celebrates Christmas and New year, Orthodox Christians are still in fast process.
on own weaknesses and problems with the greater attention to self discipline and commandment, among them the highest are love to God and Love to fellow people. It requires more ascetic life, feeding only with plant meal (during some fasts the fish is permitted), restrictions in sexual life, more frequent confessions and communions. All this is impossible without the experienced Teacher, who helps to define the frames of ascetic restrictions for not to be damaging and overwhelming the possibilities of fasting person. It is always reminded that fast is not a diet and should not be reduced only to food, sex and joy restrictions, but in fact on the background of strict nutrition change the sensitivity and reflectivity of human being is increasing. Life problems, the problems in interpersonal relationships, family, previous experience are being actualized. The believer is undergoing all events of Christ’s life before the Resurrection, assessing and re-assessing with necessary attention existing or newly emerging situations, own position and behaviour in face of God and with support of priest – spiritual teacher or simply witness in confession (it depends on the style or on the level of spiritual relationships) comes to the celebration of Easter (or other celebration finalizing the fast process) with the problem resolution and in joy of communion with Christ with other fellow participants. The circle is finalized with a sense of lessons learned, positive assessment of the situation outcome, celebration of personal victory over the evil and own weaknesses. Fasting and experience of overcoming of problems with support of caring Adults- experienced teachers is mentioned by informants as an important part of Church life.

S. (65 years female from Ukraine) stands at the icon of Mother of God, dressed in black with a sad expression of the face.

"Something happened?" I'm asking carefully. She answers and starts to cry - "the child... of my daughter... died before the delivery. We were waiting nine months, I can't see the children. "I am asking how it happened, she tells. The woman, who stands near, intervenes: "You never know what is better. God knows- maybe he saved all of you from something worse. Who knows? Another woman joins the conversation: when it happened? Yesterday? So big Holiday today- Uspenie (Dormition of Most Holy Mother of God) - God has taken him in so great day. Face of S. is lightening: Yes, what can I do...
We ask about daughter, and she stops crying. "I should call, I should take care on daughter... She is still in the hospital..."

Thus, with the help of Icon of Most Holy Mother of God in the context of Great Holiday after the fast, our interaction helps S. to deal, emotionally, to attribute positive meaning to event and shift to the role of mother and helper.

"My friends betrayed me. It happened last year during Great Fast, people say, there are always temptations when fasting. When you are undergoing through all the difficulties and temptations of the Great Fast, you undergo the way of Christ to the Crucifixion and Resurrection. People were insulting and abusing Him, the God. Why? I was crying when the women came and stand with me asking "Don't cry, please. Each of us has the own pain. You see- I am not crying". I knew she has lost only son recently. When looking at people going to communion with the crossed hands I had a feeling, that each of them is sharing the destiny of God at the earth. And He was asking Father to forgive people. As Father Sergey said during the confession, you can be never liberated without forgiveness. You are connected with insulters until you will not forgive. I can say that now I am free from the insult. I don't feel angry, I even managed to reconcile. Of course, we don't have same relationships, I realized the motives of their conduct. It was not easy to forgive. Here I was taught that only the Mercy is higher than Justice. Only the Love is higher than the Low. (42 years female from Latvia).

In fact, fasting often plays a role of facilitation of crises to be successfully resolved with positive outcomes. It can be, in some sense, to be compared with resilience training. Fasting as a context of meaning involves the psychological, spiritual as well as the bodily experience. Personal suffering is so linked into a religious context of meaning, shared by others. Attributing meaning in this way is enhancing coping and resilience potential.

**Personal change.** The relevant question regards the influence of crisis and coping on how a person esteems and interprets himself or herself. Below I'm quoting my informants using the constructs *I have, I am, I can* suggested by the International Resilience Project:
I have God (God is with me), I have trust, I have a hope, I have a joy, I have inner freedom, I have personal freedom, I have a mission, I have better health (health is returning)

I am not ideal, but I learn; I expect the better; I am quiet; I am useful; I am Orthodox Christian-belonging, I am different, I am spiritual; I am strong (have a strength of will)

I can reach goals; I can win; I can start from the beginning; I am capable (I can do a lot for the parish); I can learn; I can study

I have an experience- my experience is not buried, it is with me. With this baggage I can live everywhere.- Victor

Through the interviews I was asking my informants if they feel changed by the experience of Church community life, and about the contribution of the Church community life to this change. All of informants have stated that they are not same persons as before the joining Church. As one of informants said Man is changing. The circumstances change human being undergoing through the heart.- Vladimir

Perception of personal change shows not only psychological adaptation but features of personal growth and resilience as the strengthened capacity to face, overcome, and even be learning, spiritually growing and developing by the adversities of life.

"I am different person now. Well, I am not ideal, but I learn"- Anton

"I obtained the inner freedom. Maybe it sounds too loudly."- Elizaveta

"Every year there are changes in me, every fast I change. I'm not ideal, but I learn. I try to grow up myself. What kind of changes? I'm different. Helping others. Better health. Spirituality. And this is the reason why the health is better. I had problems with nerves, before, I couldn't withstand. Now I have the strength of will, reaching goals, win. If God will, (with happy smile) maybe I will even study"- Anton
This personal growth is not individual process. "Transformation, salvation is synergic within the context of Church. Other ways are completing. Other people". - Konstantin

"There was a period when I was like frozen, didn't trust people, only saints stayed the authorities-that's because I was in opposition to Church hierarchy, 'popes'. I didn't admit the Mercy, only the Justice. In Amsterdam Church I met people who are really serving God. I see in different people here what I can learn from them- in one- self-control, in another one-humility". - Vladimir

The Church has the library (so called information centre) and the book shop with a wide range of Christian literature, video films. Participation in service, Divine Liturgy, joint feasts, preaching and teaching, pastoral counseling as well as the interaction of people with common system of values and beliefs creates the "webs of significance" (Geertz 1973:5) that underlie social life of community and give it coherence and meaning.

**Chapter IV. Conclusions.**

Migration, as a process of change can be considered as a process of psychosocial transition and can be compared with the developmental crises. For the migrants in first generation, cultural bereavement, massive social loss and disruption of individual life world, makes this process of change especially painful, creates the feelings of isolation and alienation as people attempt to define themselves in relation to the world around them and to (re)construct individual life world, personal Oneness and Wholeness. The interplay of different factors while experiencing the adversities and undergoing the process of change affects the outcomes of this process and depends on the attribution of meaning to human experience.

Socio-cultural space created in the Church facilitates the contacts and acquaintance of people from the countries of Christian Orthodox background, provides them with the opportunity to meet former compatriots, discuss the common experience. It facilitates the process of remembrance with people of common experience of the past, sharing and talking about the emotional dimensions of remembrance and ways people have found to
deal. It makes possible the process of the negotiation of meaning of this experience. This space provides them with the opportunity to express beliefs in a way familiar and habitual to people, enhancing and reproducing religious practices of their home countries, like mourning and wedding ceremonies, christening children, celebration of holydays, and in this sense, it reduces the sense of up-rooting and loss.

Entailing the shaping of physical spaces, images, languages, Orthodox textual and musical heritage of different countries, this place does not so much reinforces the sense of belonging to and inheritance of, a particular ethnic background, but reinforces the sense of belonging to Orthodox Christian culture and facilitates the construction of Christian Orthodox identity, and at the same time, gives the possibility to remain “ethnic”.

At the same time, the presence of Dutch language, Dutch Christian Orthodox cultural heritage, Dutch priests and deans (leaders and teachers), readers, participants of choir, Dutch members of parish, symbolic presence of Dutch founder of Church, worship to Dutch saints, create the symbolic space enhancing the sense of cohesion with the host country. It facilitates the psychosocial and socio-cultural transition process for the newcomers to the country, while leaving the possibility to pray and to communicate in native languages, and remain ethnic in the process of manufacturing of new identity in the host country. It enhances the sense of sharing common cultural heritage with Dutch population, and the belonging to common roots, softens the sense of cultural difference with a larger “pragmatic” and “materialist” society for the old members of the community, long time migrants, in spite of existing distance between autochtone Dutch and “non-Dutch”, Eastern European groups within the community. Participating in the restoration of a society’s heritage and culture helps to restore a sense of collective identity (Silove 2004:47)

Dutch community in the Church can be considered as one of the bridges to the larger society, which can widen the social networks of migrants and increase their adaptational possibilities, though this potential is not currently fully realized. Enlarging of social network can be also potential source for social support. In this sense the efforts of group “Miracle” led by one of the Dutch community members and oriented not only on
the concrete results and material benefits of the work, but on the building up the trust and meaningful social relationships, is vital for migrants, especially for those unemployed and without legal status.

Combination of Eastern and Western features, European and Asian, or African or American, styles of behaviour, languages Threshold of East and West, alive and deceased, old and new, Dutch and non-Dutch, ethnic Russian and native Dutch in Russian Orthodox Church, makes this place a kind of shelter and bridge from home to the host country and to the Heaven Homeland helping in re-rooting and designing routes to migrant identities.

Belonging to the community, to the social network of it's members and living the life of Amsterdam Christian Orthodox Church creates the sense of structure in life of people many of whom have not permanent job, relatives or close friends in the Netherlands. Participation in Church activities reduces uncertainty in state of inbetweenness. The Homeland in Heaven ("nebesnaya rodina")- the point of arrival and desire to belong- helps to obtain internal locus of control: the ability to influence events using the support of virtual transnational spiritual Family and Kinship.

Most of the new members are practically invisible and have not so much contacts with the core community. The potential of old members of community, who are, at the same time, migrants with certain length of participation, records of living in the host country, with a certain baggage of religious experience and coping, can be more fully realized with respect to their motivations, capacities and initiatives, especially towards helping new members and newcomers to the Netherlands in their psychological and socio-cultural adaptation. Enhancing opportunities for helping can give new meanings to the experiences of old community participants, increase the competences of both sides, contribute to their empowerment.

The process of meaning attribution reveals the attitude to adversities as to a learning environment, to own weaknesses- as to opportunities for development, purification and salvation, to strengths- as to the talents given by God that should be realized and applied. Assimilation and appreciation of past experience is shaped with the patterns of
positive emotional experience of present and positive construction of future, satisfaction by life - thanks giving to God for every day, even for troubles as for the lessons that can be learned.

Participation in a meaningful social context is empowering. And the interplay of protective factors like perceived availability and actual social support, mentoring, presence of caring Adults, sense of belonging to positive social group, feeling of safety – all this contributes to the strengthening the coping abilities when facing adversities of migrant life.

Receiving support gives meaning to individuals’ lives by virtue of motivating them to be attached to these ties. Being embedded in a positive social world might be more powerful than receiving help (Rook, Schvarzer & Leppin in Kamperman, 2005:27). In Orthodox Christian tradition, the social services for the members (as well as for the larger population in need) still stay underdeveloped, especially in the comparison with many other Christian confessions. The demand exists for social services for the populations of countries of Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, as well as in migrant church communities. The development of social services is realized as a necessity by the leaders of Orthodox Christian Churches not a long time ago.

In the community of Christian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam members sometimes apply and receive the information and help necessary for the problem-solving coping, can get emotional support, friendly advice. Although, this type of help is not perceived by many participants as a social support, and they understand the social support more in terms of material supplies (which sporadically also can be available in critical situations). Social support, an interactive process, refers to the function and quality of social relationships, such as perceived availability of help or support actually received (Schvarzer & Leppin, 1991 in Kamperman, 2005:112). The mobilization of social support can be understood as coping. At the same time, as it was stated, the perceived level of social support plays, sometimes, more important role in the empowerment, than support actually received. Programmatic social support exists only in form of availability of summer camps for the children of parish members.
Assimilation of painful and, sometimes, traumatic experience into life lessons learned, uncertainty- into open opportunities, adversity- into the learning environment and opportunity for personal growth and salvation, weaknesses- into the opportunities for development contribute to the construction of optimism and hopefulness.

Fasting as a context of meaning involves the psychological, spiritual as well as the bodily experience. Personal suffering is so linked into a religious context of meaning, shared by others. Attributing meaning in this way is enhancing coping and resilience potential. In fact, fasting plays a role of facilitation of crises to be successfully resolved with positive outcomes and positive emotional experience. It can be, in some sense, to be compared with resilience training.

The community of Russian Christian Orthodox Church in Amsterdam contributes to the psychosocial well-being for its members by strengthening coping abilities (making sense from suffering, integrating past experience in present, attribution of positive meaning to suffering). Belonging to the transcendent metaphysical trans-national, trans-ethnic spiritual family and kinship is re-rooting.

Experience of overcoming the problems and adversities of life with support of caring Adults of spiritual Family and Kinship, patterning the repeated states of positive emotional experience through the communion strengthens coping abilities.

Providing the socio-cultural and symbolic space for contacts and communication with counterparts for newcomers from different ethnic origin, for meaning making from experience and cognitive- emotional coping, spiritual mentoring and social informational and practical support for problem solving coping, strengthens resilience by means of positive psychological constructs such as optimism, hopefulness, forgiveness.

Perception of personal change shows not only psychosocial adjustment but features of personal growth and resilience as the strengthened capacity to face, overcome, and even be learning, spiritually growing, developing by the adversities of life.
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### Table of Key Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Social status</th>
<th>Relation to Church community</th>
<th>Period of migration</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Sergey Ovsyannikov</td>
<td>54 years old male, married, Dutch spouse, has children, employed</td>
<td>Rector, Head of Parish Council, in the community 16 years</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vera</td>
<td>31 years old female, single, student, works part-time</td>
<td>In the community 4 years, member of parish council</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>31 years old male, divorced, American/Dutch spouse in past, employed</td>
<td>In the community 14 years, administrator of parish council</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>29 years old female, divorced, Dutch spouse in past, employed</td>
<td>Newcomer to the community, 1 year</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anton</td>
<td>32 years old male, single, illegal worker</td>
<td>In the community 5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Country of North Caucasus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyudmila</td>
<td>45 years old female, divorced, Dutch spouse in past, employed</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizaveta</td>
<td>26 years old female, married, Dutch spouse, has one child, house wife</td>
<td>In the community 5 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nina</td>
<td>50 years old female, married, Dutch spouse in past, has son, self employed</td>
<td>Newcomer to the community- 2 years</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lina</td>
<td>26 years old female, lives with Dutch partner, has daughter, asylum seeker</td>
<td>Newcomer to the community- 1 year</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>53 years old male, widowed, has children, asylum seeker</td>
<td>Newcomer to the community, 1 year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konstantin</td>
<td>26 years old male, single, labour migrant</td>
<td>Newcomer to the community 1 year</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>Rosa</td>
<td>35 years old female, single, refugee</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marina</td>
<td>27 years female, single, student</td>
<td>Newcomer to the community, 2 months</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vladimir</td>
<td>27 years old male, divorced, illegal migrant</td>
<td>Newcomer to the community, 2 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>47 years old male, married, has children, illegal migrant</td>
<td>In the community 4 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3. Preliminary Problem Analysis Diagram

- Community participation
  - Social participation
  - Acculturation
  - Belonging
  - Social support
  - Coping and resilience

- NL-base immigrant discourses (media, norms, values)
- Policy (national)
  - EU policy
  - Economics
  - Globalization

- Empowerment
  - New identity formation
  - Socio-cultural adaptation
  - Psychological adaptation

- Improved psychological social health