Intergenerational Relations in Families with an Immigrant Background

Report on family interviews for project INTERFACE

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INTRODUCTION

Immigration is a huge transition that requires reassessment of several central questions of identity and belonging. On one hand, family can be considered representing continuity in this process, a point of reference through which life in the new society is lived and assessed. On the other hand, family relations come to be under reassessment as well, and have to be rearranged according to new demands (Huttunen 2002). In post-migration context, the nuclear family often gains ground at the cost of the extended family, sharp segregation between sexes and generations decreases and mothers and children gain more autonomy. Thus, in this new context pre-existing cultural patterns must be reconstructed into new forms. (Pels & de Haan 2007, 83–84.) While a vast amount of research on integration of immigrants exists, it is mostly concentrated on individual immigrants and their integration in separate fields, such as in employment and school. Recently, the growing need for knowledge on issues of family and intergenerational relations of immigrants has been brought up in Finnish research as well (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, Martikainen 2007).

Also, research on immigration has, for the greater part, focused on adult immigrants and hence the perspective of young immigrants and the question of intergenerational relations inside immigrant families have been largely missing in the research conversations around acculturation and integration (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, 36). The position of immigrant youth is different from that of adult immigrants, since besides going through the transition from one cultural environment to another, they experience developmental transition, adolescence, with its multiple challenges at the same time. Their position is, therefore, one of double-transition. (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2003, 20.) Parental support may considerably ease both developmental tasks and the integration process of young immigrants: the more adolescents experience support and understanding provided by at least one parent, the less they experience acculturation stress, and the higher is their self-esteem and degree of life-satisfaction. (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000, 53–54.) Cohesive immigrant families with strong social ties can provide young immigrants with social capital that helps them maintain constructive engagement in activities outside the private sphere, especially in school. Nevertheless, immigrant parents may be less able to monitor and back up their children *outside* the family sphere, due to imperfect knowledge of the workings of the new society, lack of language skills or other resources. Young immigrants may consequently be more on their own beyond the home walls. (Lauglo 2000, 159–164.)

The double-transition of immigrant youth causes several challenges in relationships between young immigrants and their parents. Young generation in general tends to question traditional gender, generation and authority relations and create a space and a culture of their own. Besides these kinds of "ordinary" contests, young people with an immigrant background are often forced to question and reconstruct their cultural background and its traditions as well. This may lead to complicated relationships and negotiations with parents who may have contesting expectations about their children, suffering from a fear of "losing" their children to the new culture on one hand and posing aspirations about better life on them on the other. (Harinen et al. 2005, 285–286, Alitolppa-Niitamo 2003.) Young immigrants, growing up in a different cultural environment than their parents, may thus often be in the intersection of possible inner conflicts of family (Hautaniemi 2004, 54).

INTERFACE (*Immigrants and National integration strategies: developing a Trans-European Framework for Analysing Cultural and Employment-related integration*) is a comparative, EU-funded research project seeking to address the question of family in the integration process of immigrants. The starting point of the project INTERFACE is understanding the integration of immigrants as a multifaceted phenomenon with several different, analytical dimensions (work/school, social and cultural spaces, private sphere) working in a dynamic and interrelated process. In the everyday lives of immigrants, these dimensions cannot be separated, but overlap and interact in multiple ways.

Family, as a point of reference, lies interestingly in the intersection of these dimensions, while also being a unit with its own function and dynamics. The main objective of the project is to build knowledge about the integration process of immigrants in the family context. The INTERFACE European partnership consists of research institutes and non-governmental organisations located in five European countries that have developed a strong expertise on the new immigration phenomenon and integration issues over the past ten years. Based in Germany, Italy, Belgium, Finland, and the Czech Republic, the partners include respectively: CJD-Eutin, IPRS, GERME, The Finnish Youth Research Network, and RILSA.

In the context of the INTERFACE project, I have focused in the questions concerning intergenerational relations inside families with an immigrant background. I have examined how the interviewees gave meanings to the intergenerational relations and the changes they report having occurred in these in the post-migration context. Special interest is also placed on the challenges concerning the parents' and their children's different styles in combining the two cultures they are living in. As my data, I have used the interviews I have gathered in Finland for the INTERFACE project. Additionally, I have chosen 26 reports[1] on family interviews, produced by INTERFACE partners in other four countries to be examined more thoroughly from the viewpoint of intergenerational relations.

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1   Families: DE1_Cape Verde, DE2_Turkey, DE3_Afganistan /Ukraine, DE4_Kazakstan, DE7_Portugal, DE9_Kirghizia, DE12_Kirghizia, DE13_Uzbekistan, DE14_Ukraine, DE16_Russia, DE20_Turkey, I26_Ecuador, I27_Ecuador, I29_Iran, I32_Peru, I35_Philippines, I40_Sri Lanka, I41_Ukraine, FI42_Kenya, FI43_Russia, FI44_Russia, FI45_Iran, FI47_Kosovo, FI48_Somalia, FI49_Kosovo, FI50_Somalia, FI51_Irak, CR53_Belarus, CR54_Vietnam, CR61_Ukraine, CR63_Russia, BE66_Azerbaidjan, BE69_Philippines, BE71_Columbia, BE72_Uzbekistan, BE74_Turkey

1   FAMILY INTERVIEWS AS THE DATA

1.1   Methodological choices in INTERFACE project

The methodology adopted by INTERFACE project, repeated interviews with families with an immigrant background, was grounded on the idea to give as much space as possible for the interviewees to share those experiences of their family life they considered relevant. The interviews were conceived of as "multiple-voices narrations" in which all family members were asked to participate. The purpose of choosing such method was to focus on narration of family and create interaction between the family members, with different points of view emerging in relation to the same events.

It was agreed that in the three-step interview process, the first interview was for focusing on the narration of the family and the second and third interviews are for the interviewer to propose further themes. In practice, the method was, however, adjusted in some extent according to demands of different situations. For the first interview, certain broad themes were covered with all families (see appendix on themes), but not in structured form or order. In the second and the third interviews, interviewers were free to ask questions they considered relevant in the context of the particular family.

The data of the INTERFACE project consisted thus of repeated qualitative interviews with families with an immigrant background living in five European Union countries. Altogether 77 families were interviewed. To render the data accessible to every partner, an English translation of the interview transcriptions would have been the most suitable solution, but as a compromise due to financial and time constraints, every partner was asked to produce short reports in English of each family life story they collected. This allowed us to somehow negotiate language boundaries and made it possible for every partner to get to capture the essence of every family met.

1.2   Family interviews in Finland

1.2.1   WHO WERE INTERVIEWED?

In Finland, I gathered the data for the project by interviewing families with an immigrant background, living in the area of metropolitan Helsinki. Altogether 26 interviews were carried out with ten families between April and November 2007. While I was aspiring after three interviews with each family, this was not possible with all families. Since I wanted to work on the grounds of my interviewees, the amount of interviews was curtailed in three families. Thus, seven families were interviewed thrice, two families twice and one family one time.

At present, the ten families I interviewed shared many things: they consisted of one or two parents living with their children, they lived in the outskirts of the Helsinki metropolitan area and had experienced the immigration within 16 years or less. Despite the resemblances in their current circumstances, they constituted an extremely heterogeneous group of people with varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds, family and personal histories, competences, internal relations and perceptions of what family is or should be. Accordingly, the experiences of present day and future and strategies coping with them were multiple.

Seven of the families were with a refugee (or an asylum seeker) background, one had work-related

reasons for migration, one family-related reasons and one was a re-migrant family. The length of stay of the families in Finland varied from three to sixteen years. By ethnic origin, the families were Kurds, Somalis, Russians, Albanians and Kenyans. The countries of their origin were accordingly Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Russia and the former USSR, Kosovo and Kenya. By religious background, half of the families were Muslim, two were Orthodox and the remaining three were with no specific commitment to any religion. The significance of religion varied in the interviewees' lives according to personal faith and tradition in the country of origin.

If defining a family as parents and their children, the ten families included altogether 51 persons, out of whom 37 participated at least in one interview. 16 of them were parents (10 mothers, 6 fathers) and 21 children and young people (12 girls or young women, 9 boys or young men). Additionally in two cases, another relative who was (temporarily) living with the family was also included in an interview. Four of the families consisted of two parents and their children, two were rebuilt families with child or children from the previous marriage(s) of one or both parents and four were single parent families, all female headed.

The ages of interviewed children and young people ranged from eight years up to 31 years. The large age scale influenced on the interviews, since the young interviewees representing the upper end of the scale had often contemplated their own position quite much and had thus very analytical and well-founded opinions. For the youngest interviewees, verbalizing the features of their everyday life was more challenging and conversations remained on a more concrete level. Of course there were also personal differences in styles and approaches with which the interviewees shared their experiences, some being very open and detailed and others more taciturn.

The duration of the interviews ranged from little less than an hour to over two hours, the first or the second interview often being the longest sessions. Besides the interviews, I spent some time in the families having dinners, watching television, looking through photo albums or scrapbooks and just having tea and chatting. The point here was to observe the everyday life of the family, even though it would have required much more time to actually gain information through the observation. Nevertheless, it may have helped in creating the open and relaxed atmosphere that prevailed in the interviews.

1.2.2   GATHERING THE DATA – AND WRESTLING WITH THE ETHICAL QUESTIONS

Themes related to family life are intimate by nature and thus sharing them is not necessarily easy or done lightly. Additionally, taking people with an immigrant background as the target group of a study requires particular attention to be paid on the ethical issues and communication in order to make sure the interviewees understand their position, especially in case they do not fully master the language.

Families included in the study are a selected assortment in many ways. Differences between the INTERFACE-countries in recruiting the families may have influenced on the motivation of the interviewees and the selection of the families – for instance in Italy and the Czech Republic the interviewed families were given a small reward in order to motivate them to participate, which may have had an influence on what kind of families were included. In Finland and in Germany, being recruited through immigrant organizations, some of the families are likely to represent the more active and possibly well-integrated section of immigrant population. In addition, participating in the interviews meant sharing details about personal family-life. To be motivated to do this, the interviewees need to consider the topic important and thus to consider family as a meaningful factor in one's life. Since family matters are personal and intimate and especially difficulties are often preferred not to be shared with outsiders, people with family-related problems are likely to avoid interviews of this kind.

In Finland, the interviewed families were contacted through immigrant organizations, organizations

and municipal actors doing immigrant work and personal contacts. In eight cases out of ten, the mother was contacted first. In two cases only the contact was made through the father. I also tried to get in contact with families through young people by visiting an upper level of comprehensive school and contacting youth houses. This way nevertheless proved to be more complicated and, since I had limited time for gathering the data and finding the families willing to participate was not considered too easy in any case, I decided to content myself with contacting families through parents. I am aware of the implications brought by this decision. Interview request through parents may appear a sign of downplaying the independency of children and young people or considering them as less important interviewees and may thus affect negatively on the motivation to participate in interviews. I tried to minimize this effect by telling about my research and asking the permission to interview them personally even in cases I had already gotten their permission through their parents. I also emphasized I was interested in and respected their personal opinions. Yet, it was the case in two families that the adolescent family member was reluctant to participate in the interview and thus his/her viewpoint is largely missing from my data.

Another question is the gender bias already visible in the process of gathering the data. Generally, women were considered easier to get into contact with, more interested in my study and more willing to participate. Also it was the case in some families, though not all, that the father remained more distant in the interview situations, while the mother was telling about her feelings and experiences in an open and detailed manner. In the single parent families, of course, it was only the mother's viewpoint that was gained. Within the young interviewees, the gendered pattern was not present, at least not as markedly, even though the girls slightly outnumbered the boys. The overrepresentation of women may be interpreted as a sign of the tendency to consider the family still dominantly as a sphere of women. Also the fact that the researcher, me, was a young woman must have influenced: approaching a male researcher and sharing thoughts about family-life with him may have been easier for some of my male interviewees.

Interviewing both parents and children at the same time brings transparency in the discussion and prevents the feeling that children and young people are being discussed about "behind their backs", as objects and not actors. Nevertheless, since a family is a hierarchical unit by its very nature, interviewing family members together brings about the question of whether all the interviewees have been equally free to share their opinions and experiences. Many young people do not want to share all their experiences, much less the possible problematic features in their relationships with their parents when sitting face-to-face with them. Similarly, the parents may be reluctant to share their possible uncertainties as parents or other difficult issues with their children. Suggesting such may even be seen as ethically daunting, if considering preserving the authority of parents important in the family. Thus, the picture expressed in the group interviews tends to be somewhat idealized and the inclination to express and interpret one's family-life with positive terms may be more pronounced than it would be if the family members were interviewed alone.

In practice, the method was, however, adjusted in some extent according to the demands of different situations. As the interviewer, my aim was to create an open and relaxed atmosphere in the interviews, and thus my role was based more on conversation than asking structured questions. The informal nature of the interviews led to the interviewees acting accordingly, occasionally stepping outside the conversation or in the other room and sometimes missing parts of interviews. I made no strict demands about which family members should participate in interviews and whether or not they should remain the same in all three interviews. The composition of the interviews thus sometimes varied from interview to another and I was able to interview families both together and the children and the young people without the presence of their parents and vice versa. Even though this is not totally coherent with the original methodology, I believe it gave me a more nuanced view of the family dynamics.

Despite the ethical and research-related questions raised by the methodology, I found interviewing several family members at the same time enriching both in terms of getting information and of creating and maintaining the relaxed atmosphere. It gave me the opportunity to observe the communication between family members. For the interviewees, the interview situations became moments of sharing common memories and comparing experiences. The presence of the other family members helped them to remember things they would not necessarily otherwise have remembered and at their best, the interviews developed into moments of mutual reminiscence, full of warmth and joy. At times, the interviewees were excited about listening to each other and even began to "interview" each other, asking further questions on some themes. As the interviewer I experienced the interviews by and large very warm and informal moments by nature and could only admire the openness, warmth and hospitality with which I was welcomed and treated in the homes of my interviewees.

2 INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN POST-MIGRATION CONTEXT

2.1 Family composition and generations

At the time of the interviews, the composition of the interviewed families, as units living together, was very much like that of European families in general: one or two parents living together with their children. Only in three families (DE13, CR61, BE71), the family members represented three generations, the grandparent(s) of the youngest generation sharing the apartment. Immigration had thus often resulted in a shift towards the Western nuclear family model (see also Liebkind et al. 2004, 181; Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002, 279), since the vast majority of the families originated in cultures in which larger families and tightly-knit kinship networks are an important part of social life.

Regardless of this shift, the larger family unit had maintained its importance in many ways. While there is a prevalent tendency in Western countries to connect the meaning of family to a household and thus shared location, research on transnationalism has shown that the experience of being a member of a family does not necessarily presume living together (Vuorela 2002). An extract from a discussion with a mother and her 11-year-old son, with Kurdish origin and living in Finland, illustrates that the understanding on who is included in a family was in many families much broader from that generally accepted in Finland.

> Mother: After she [a Finnish woman] gets married, she includes in her family only husband… eh, and children and herself. That is, it's not so much. But when I speak about it, about family, my children know that the family means, that…
> Son: The whole kin.
> Mother: [*laughs*] The whole kin almost. [FI45]

In many families, relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins had played a central part in selecting the country of destination, settling down and starting the life in the receiving society. Besides keeping in contact with the relatives living nearby, also transnational ties were maintained with relatives still living in the country of origin or dispersed in other parts of the world. The large family continued to affect its individual members even when it was scattered around in different countries. Hence, family does not necessarily need to imply physical proximity, but can also be an "imagined community". (Hautaniemi 2004, 178; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002.) Transnational ties had, nevertheless, often different meanings for the parents and the young people. While the parents shared a part of common history with the relatives they were keeping in touch with, the young interviewees often knew them only through stories told by their parents, phone conversations and correspondence. Relationships with relatives living in outside the receiving country are thus often of different quality for young people and their parents – transnational can be both "real" and "imagined" within the same family.

Immigration patterns bring up the questions of transnationalism also inside the nuclear family unit. While some families had been lucky enough to have the possibility to migrate together, many others had been separated from their family members during the migration process for periods lasting up to several years. Nearly two thirds (22 out of 36) of the families examined here had migrated in the form of chain migration. In most cases, one or both parents had emigrated beforehand in order to find work

and make arrangements, leaving their children temporarily behind to be cared by relatives. In two cases (FI48, FI50), the parents had sent some of their older children in the receiving country in advance to live with relatives already migrated. In the migration process, extended family relations are thus often utilized to secure the care for the children and other resources during the periods of separation (Erel 2002; Hautaniemi 2004, 52). Additionally, there were other reasons why the parents and their children had spent even years living in different countries, such as a tradition of sending children to the country of origin during their childhood years, reported by a Philipino family (I35) in Italy.

The periods of separation may have long-lasting effects on the family structure and intergenerational relations, even after reunification (see also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002, 279). Especially the parents described separations from their children as extremely stressful and hard to bear. The young people instead, while clearly stating to prefer living together with their parents, sometimes had also positive memories of these periods. Nevertheless, reunification had not always been harmonious. Some of the children and young people reported they had gone through periods when they held their parents responsible for abandoning them, or felt estrangement from them. Maintaining warm intergenerational relations during and after separation therefore seemed to require especially plenty of time, effort, understanding and communication from both the children and young people and their parents. Even though most of the families had been successful in re-establishing their relationships after separation, there was an example of a family originating in Sri Lanka, currently living in Italy (I40), with extremely tense and problematic intergenerational relations, resulting in large extent from inability to deal in a constructive manner with the wounds caused by separation.

2.2   Intergenerational positions

Even though migration had brought economic stability for the majority of the interviewed families, homesickness and feelings of being a stranger, combined with problems in arranging life in practice in the new environment, were sources of stress for many. When migrating to a new country, an immigrant family is often very alone (Marjeta 2001). Losing the active social networks of family and relatives, friends and neighbours, is hard and creating new contacts is not necessarily simple, especially for the parents who may lack environments for socializing. The interviewed families repeatedly described the first period in the receiving country as the hardest, due to the loneliness and unfamiliarity of the environment. Consequently, the family had gained much weight as the primary social context and a source of support, trust and familiarity. A 16-year-old girl with a Somali background, currently living in Finland, states:

> Well, yes, us, this has, that we've become closer [*with each other*] when, when we live here in Finland, it is so far away from your own home. Then… support is only your family and everything, in the start, when you get, when you don't get friends. [FI48]

Additionally, when having moved in form of chain migration, the family members who have migrated earlier had been in an important position, since they had been able to provide, besides emotional support, also concrete help, guidance and contacts. For many interviewed families, immigration was thus an experience that had revealed the family members' interdependency and brought them closer to each other.

Almost exclusively, both the parents and their children presented the family as a positive resource. Immigration experience had nevertheless put intergenerational relations to a test and several questions concerning authority, communication and cultural habits among other things had to be reassessed and rearranged in the post-migration context.

2.2.1 RECIPROCITY AND LOYALTY

By and large, both the young generation and their parents were speaking about their mutual relationships with warmth and loyalty. Reciprocity appeared to be a key aspect in intergenerational relations in the interviewed families, the young people and their parents supporting and helping each other according to their special social, economic and information resources.

Reasons the parents gave for their emigration decisions illustrated the important role the family and children have in migration processes. Even if family had been divided and separated during the process, the migration decisions had been done within the family context and aimed at maximizing the well-being of the family (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, 51; Huttunen 2002, 337). The interviewed parents typically named the well-being and better future prospects of their children as primary reasons for their immigration and staying put in the receiving society[2]: the receiving countries in Europe were typically considered safe and peaceful environments for the children to grow up and offering them plenty of possibilities in life, especially regarding education. The children's better opportunities in the receiving countries also acted as an impetus for the parents to strive for a more complete integration in the new society, as a mother with Kenyan origin, currently living in Finland, states:

> So I think there's very many opportunities in Finland and we need, to respect and not corrupt that. That's why I try so hard, to get myself education and get a job, and get a little bit *in* in the society. For the sake of my children. So, here they are, here they can get education and I can also have something, I can do, some work when they are here. If they are grown, then, they'll decide for themselves. [FI42]

The children were often articulated as a reason also for staying put in the receiving country and not returning to country of origin. Even in cases the parents had earlier seriously planned returning or moving in another country, growing awareness of their children's rootedness in the receiving country had made them change their minds. By settling down in the receiving country for good, the parents wished to provide their children with a stable environment and to spare them from feelings of displacement or rootlessness they possibly had been suffering themselves. Considering the children's educational possibilities better in the receiving country was another important factor in settling down. The parents in deed repeatedly stated to "live for their children", or emphasised their children's long-term well-being as the most important goal in their lives.

The interviewed children and young people were responding to their parents' reasoning in multiple ways, nonetheless most often with understanding, gratitude and respect. Many emphasised the sacrifices their parents had made for them and saw them first of all as sources of support and spur. Often the young interviewees told how their parents always thought what was best for them and guided them in the right direction (although they did not necessarily agree on the direction). A 17-year-old girl with a Kurdish background and currently living in Finland describes the influence her mother has had on her:

> I don't know how to tell it, but like, mom really directs a lot and guides… that, like, she has spurred me on very much and everything, I don't think I would have done this well if mom was… wouldn't have been on my side. [FI45]

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2 For obvious reasons, the families migrated as refugees named persecution or intolerable living conditions in the country of origin as the primary reason for migration, and not the educational opportunities. Even though, the better opportunities of their children were important for them as well when speaking about future life in the receiving society.

Another young woman with parents originating from Cape Verde (DE01), currently living in Germany, described parents as role models of children, considering herself an open-minded person thanks to her parents, who had always given that model to her. Thus, the parents' constructive attitudes were thought to have a positive effect on the general view of life and the young interviewees' own ambitions.

Even though strongly stating to prefer living with their families, having dependent children was sometimes a source of increased stress for the parents. When moving to a new country with children, they have not only themselves to take care of but also their children, who need attention and several arrangements have to be made with the social services, day care and school. The different environment alone may appear as threatening. For the parents, immigration may thus mean growing anxieties with regard to the children and an accentuated need to keep an eye on them. Lacking the social network of grandparents, other relatives and friends, who were previously able to offer help with childminding in the country of origin made some parents feel they had bigger work load and were more on their own with familial responsibilities (see also Marjeta 2001, 106). On the other hand, for some parents the safeness of the new environment allowed them to give more freedom to their children.

> Interpreter [after the mother]: Her worry, her worries are gone, that is, if he [the son] goes out, it is, everything is quite ok, and it is, she doesn't need all the time, to go after him to see.
> Son: That, in Russia mother was, like, always looking after me, or, like, she came outside to see if I'm ok. But here I can stay out until nine and it's no problem. [FI44]

The children were also seen as an element positively influencing the parents' and the whole family's integration, since they were able to provide the parents with information about workings of the receiving society, help them with the language and offer opportunities to find social contacts through their contacts. For the young interviewees, helping their family this way was a natural task, a way to do their share for the family.

2.2.2 DISSONANT ACCULTURATION

Even though in a majority of the families the supportive role of parents was clearly pronounced, there were elements brought by the immigration experience that had rearranged the positions of the parents and the children and young people in certain important respects. As is pointed out in several studies (f ex Al-Ali 2002, 92; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001), children and adolescents generally find it easier than their parents to learn to master many skills required in the new environment. The data of INTERFACE project also illustrated clearly that the young generation had adopted many skills and attitudes needed in the receiving societies quicker and more thoroughly than their parents. Their language skills were without exception better than their parents' they generally had more social contacts with the mainstream society and consequently often also understood the habits and workings of the receiving society better.

While the children and young people come into intense contact with the culture of receiving society in school, their parents instead may be more removed from it, especially if they have difficulties in finding employment or are employed in so called "immigrant industries" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, 73–74). Some parents in the data had succeeded stunningly in re-educating themselves and finding permanent or short-term employment and some worked voluntarily in organizations, which offered them social contacts with both nationals of receiving societies and other nationals.

Yet many others still had remained more isolated due to lack of access to such environments, their social contacts limiting mostly to family sphere, relatives and other immigrants with the same ethnic background.

Even though the work-life is not the only way to seek contacts with the receiving society and does not automatically lead to improved opportunities to socialize, it is an important sphere for adult immigrants in familiarizing oneself with the receiving society and people in it. However, depending on the structure of the labour market, labour legislation and level of social security system in the five INTERFACE-countries among other things, the parents' work had in some cases negative influence on family cohesion and intergenerational relations. If parents are forced to work extremely long hours or in several jobs in order to gain enough money for living, the majority of their time is spent outside the home and thus their ability to communicate with and keep an eye on their children is more limited. Their children may accordingly suffer from not having enough attention and company of their parents. In a family originating in Vietnam, currently living in the Czech Republic the 21-year-old son describes changes in their family life brought by the parents' long working hours after immigration: "*There was no time to make trips together, mother stopped telling me bedside stories…*" (CR-54). Society's macro structure therefore has significant implications for immigrant families' lives, their special challenges and even intergenerational relations.

The differences between generations in creating new social contacts and learning the language and other skills were well acknowledged in the interviewed families. Besides their ability to learn quicker, many of the young interviewees pointed out also that the separation from relatives and friends in the country of origin hit their parents harder. Having moved to Europe in many cases as very young children (if not born there), their own memories about their country of origin and relatives were rather vague and incoherent, while their parents had often remained more deeply rooted to their country of origin. Seeing their parents suffering from the combination of emotional load and difficulties in learning the new language and other skills, the young interviewees often saw their own position easier than that of their parents. (See also Honkasalo et al. 2007, 21.) Many of them also brought up the fact that their parents had carried the heavy load of responsibilities after immigration, while they themselves had been irresponsible children unaware of any problems. The young people's stories about their relationships with their parents were thus many times coloured by aspects of loyalty and gratitude (see also Honkatukia & Suurpää 2007). A 21-year-old young woman with Albanian background, the youngest of eight children, describes her own position after the immigration easy if compared to her parents or older siblings:

> Like… or, like they [*the parents*] have, like, brought up this many children in a dif-, different culture, so it has been really hard for them. And… but… no, I dunno, or, I've been so small, that, [*the older brothers*] have been older, then… like, maybe they have had it harder than me, that I have been just, like… aaah! [*laughs*] Like, I've just grown up. [FI47]

Being already at early age aware of the relative ease with which they had learned the language and adjusted themselves to the habits of the new society if compared with their parents, the vast majority of the young interviewees had taken helping their parents as a natural task and responsibility. In almost every family, the children had at least previously acted as mediators between the receiving society and their parents, explaining the workings of the society and assisting with the language for example in the dealings with health care and social services. A 15-year-old boy with a Somali background explains how his parents need help due to their limited language skills:

Son: […] They [the parents] have, like, now learned to understand speech at some extent, but they don't quite, like, if there's a conversation, like now between us, like we speak now, then… they don't quite get it.
Interviewer: Yeah. [*pause*] And then you help them or?
Son: Yeah, yeah, without question. With all the tasks and these things. I explain… eh, like, how things are and how you… I read things and… [FI48]

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call the process in which children's learning of the new language and culture progresses in a faster pace than their parents' *dissonant acculturation* (see also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004). Dissonant acculturation may lead to role reversal between parents and their children, especially if the parents lack the means of coping independently in different social settings. It may thus undercut parental authority and create a gap between generations. (Portes & Rumbaut 2001, 53–54.) While dissonant acculturation and role reversal do not automatically lead to problems between generations, it is obvious that increased responsibilities, such as acting as a translator, let the children and young people in on issues that normally would not be their responsibility to think about. Thus this may increase their cognitive and emotional load, which is by no means small in post-migration context in any case.

Dissonant acculturation and the young generation's increased responsibilities (and consequently also power) were experienced in various ways in different families. For some, it seemed to be a natural result of the new situation. Sometimes the children's quick adaptation of the new language was even a source of pride for the parents, as they considered it helpful to be able to handle situations in the family sphere and not be dependent on outside help. Yet for others the altered positions of generations were not unproblematic but created stress and ambivalent feelings for both the children and young people and their parents. A family originating from Uzbekistan and currently living in Germany (DE13) reported that his shift of power balance had put the internal cohesion of the family to a test. For the parents, depending on their children in many situations meant weakening of their sense of authority and feeling of being "speechless". For their children, who had been adolescents at the time of the immigration, it has meant being more on their own due to their parents' relative inability to guide them. As the parents put it, "*they had had to grow up faster*". The more advanced language skills of the children and young people sometimes resulted in not only increased responsibilities for them to help their parents with the language but also easy opportunities to hide certain things from them when wanted: simply by speaking with each other the language of the receiving country they could prevent their parents from understanding them. While it is not only in families with an immigrant background where adolescents are trying and succeeding in keeping secrets from their parents, severe risks can be identified in a situation where the language skills of parents and their children are drifting far apart. Building up common knowledge grows harder if there is no common language with which both feel free and easy to communicate.

2.3   Close family and parental authority

Emphasising close family ties and unity of the family were common among the interviewed families. The closeness of family was often seen going hand in hand with the more intensive normative function of family, giving the family the responsibility and opportunity to observe, control and guide the behaviour of different family members. Authority to use the normative power of family is in the hands of the parents and hierarchical order between generations was thus more pronounced. This tendency to stress the parental authority, which is shown in many previous studies on immigrant families as well (Perhoniemi & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2006, 57; Pentikäinen 2005, 227, Honkasalo et al. 2007, 19–20).

Due to differences in the cultures of upbringing of children, habits in receiving societies emphasising

more liberal parenting style than has been customary in the countries of origin, the parents often found themselves in a situation where parenting cannot be based on the previous rules. Children's observing their peers and finding out their greater freedom raises claims for equal position, and parents' attempts to hold on to their principles may result in conflicts. Many parents in the interviewed families were making complaints on how their children (or children in general) were not listening to their parents any more and how the authority of parents had diminished after the migration. The children's and young people's better competencies to act in the receiving society may also add to the parents' feelings of lack of authority and their children's impertinence. A mother originating in Columbia, currently living in Belgium, saw her own youth as a stark contrast with her daughter's:

At the beginning, I had a trauma with my daughter because when I was her age, I always had to ask permission from my mother and I had to accept either "yes" or "no" without discussing. But with my daughter, there was nothing to do. It was really like she wanted it to be. [BE71]

Since the parental authority had become questioned in the receiving country, preserving it demanded negotiations, time and effort from the parents. The accentuated need for open communication with the children about their borders and responsibilities and the reasons behind them was brought up in several conversations with parents. Many of them emphasised they did not want simply to deny certain things from their children, but the decisions of doing so were made after investigating these things and discussing them with the children.

Even though many parents had thus adopted a more negotiative style when setting limits for their children than was customary in their countries of origin, differences still remained. The reasons for boundaries were explained more but they were still expected to be obeyed. Many interviewed parents compared their own practices in upbringing with those of parents in the receiving country and criticized them of giving excess freedom to their children. A Kurdish father of two daughters, states after observing Finnish society for seven years:

In Finland, children, children maybe are given too much freedom or what is it… that, maybe it's about human rights, that there is some reason, that people give so much freedom for the children. […] But after my own experience, I've seen, and my wife is in school, that children nowadays are not doing well. At school. It's not going well. That, nobody follows any rules and everybody does whatever they want. […] [sighs] In my opinion, there should be more, people should look after their children better. So that the future would be better. [FI51]

Since many parents saw the greater freedom of children to be if not harmful, at least potentially risky, the more liberal parenting style was connected with disinterest or lesser care about the well-being of the children, which was of course hard to understand. The parents often expressed their worries about whether they were able, or would be in future, to hold on to their principles and boundaries with their children, who were in growing extent "behaving badly" or not following advice of their parents as before.

The more liberal tradition in bringing up children was often seen to be connected with less close relationships inside families and less tightly-knit family structure in the receiving country. Another phenomenon that puzzled the parents was the habit of children moving out from their childhood homes at around the age of 20, to live alone. This was widely found hard to understand, even threatening, for many of the interviewed parents interpreted it as children abandoning their parents (and vice versa). As a mother originating from Philippines and currently living in Italy (I35) commented: "*In our culture, families must live close by. Parents and children always live very close to one another, so that the parents can see their children.*" Therefore, the parents were expressing wishes that their children would keep on living with them at least until they married and had families of their own. Living separately became understandable only under circumstances in which living together was economically hard to bear: in some families, the young family member had moved out from his/

her childhood home in order to ease his/her parents' economic load. Thus, even though immigrant families many times show with their transnational practices that the "familyhood" is not only about physical closeness (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002), it was apparent that generations living together when possible was an important feature and a sign of emotional closeness for the parents.

Even though the parents were continuously expressing worries about their authority and family's unity withering away, their children's stories only seldom confirmed these threats. Instead of rebelling against their parents' authority, the young generation seemed to hold on in a fairly great extent to the same principles and values as their parents did. Especially the young interviewees representing the upper end of the age scale (in their late adolescence and older) often emphasised the importance of tightly knit family and parental authority as well. While many of the young interviewees had gone through phases during which they had rebelled against their parents or tested the "disrespectful" behavioural models of their peers at home, these had mostly remained temporary. Even though the children's and young people's behaviour almost inevitably changes in some extent in the direction of culture of receiving country, the generations in most cases had managed to find some compromise satisfying both. When compared with their parents, it was more typical for the young interviewees to express more understanding attitude towards the liberal tradition in the receiving society as a cultural difference, but nevertheless they stated to value their own tradition more. Some of the young interviewees use this difference as a means to distinct themselves positively from the Finnish families, criticizing their Finnish peers of irresponsibility and disrespectful behaviour towards their parents and stating they could not and did not want to act in such a way (FI44, FI45, FI47)(see also Honkasalo et al. 2007, 19). A 19-year-old young woman with a Russian background, who has lived in Finland for 15 years, describes:

> Yeah, well, or in the upper level of comprehensive class, when I was visiting my [Finnish] friends – […] then they just tell them where to get off, like their parents. Well, for me it has been, like.. a kind of, or, I wouldn't, for example, I coudn't do that to my parents. That, it has been like a shock, and like that, that I, I, in principle I'm glad that I have, like these, mmm, Russian tradition, culture and habits. They come like really, straight from Russia. [FI44]

The image of strict immigrant parents who constrain their children's participation in many activities of receiving society lives on in public discourse rather powerfully. While there most certainly exist young immigrants who experience their parents control over their lives as too great and constraining, the interviews nevertheless show that the question is not so black and white. For many of the young interviewees, respecting their parents was a positive matter, even a source of pride and not a feature automatically restricting their lives (see also Niemelä 2003, Honkasalo et al. 2007). It may be argued that the interview situations, the parents' presence, have influenced the ways the young interviewees speak about their parents, hiding especially the possible negative and restrictive elements, although it does not wholly explain the dominantly positive picture given by the young interviewees. Thus examining young people's own opinions about the meanings of their family relations allows problematizing the picture of victimized immigrant youth, especially girls (Honkasalo et al. 2007, 20).

2.4   Friction and negotiation between generations

Even though many young interviewees considered respecting their parents important, this by no means meant simply obedience or the absence of disagreements or conflicts. The young people and their parents engaged in frequent and continuous negotiations concerning the space, borders and responsibilities of the young people.

Serious conflicts were nonetheless not commonplace among the interviewed families. Out of

the 35 families, there was only one case in which the family was clearly having a severe and acute conflict between the generations. This exception was a result of years' antipathies, the son accusing her mother of abandoning him as a child when emigrating to the receiving country, the mother blaming his son of not understanding her hardships, not respecting his parents and not doing his share in the family. According to the 20-year-old son, it is their inability to have proper conversations that makes it impossible for them to break the vicious circle. His bitter words illustrate the difficult situation of the family and the grudge he is holding towards his parents:

> I perceive that they are guilty [of abandoning me]. Example, if you are buying a washing machine and you are not able to pay it after, why are you buying it? It is something like this. If you have the responsibility to take care, for example for a dog. If you take a dog, you have to take him for a walk, you have to feed him, etc, you have to provide for him. If at the end you will abandon it, what sense does it have? [I40]

In most cases however, it was little everyday matters, such as household chores and bed times, probably well known in every family, which caused most friction. Two extracts, the first with a 12-year-old boy with a Russian background and the second with a 19-year-old young woman with her mother, with a Russian background as well, illustrate this:

> Son (12): […] We have, like, if mom gets angry with me, I take some money and go to the shop, to buy her flowers.
> Interviewer: Oh but that's nice. What kind of things she gets angry with you?
> Son (12): Well, for example, that, me playing with the computer. Going to sleep at night. [FI43]

> Mother: Well, cleaning up, that's what we argue about sometimes. But no, usually no. […] I'd like the children to put things where they belong. [*laughs*] […] And the thing, about, looking after the clothes. […]
> Interviewer: And that's what you argue about?
> Daughter (19): Yeah, we do. And not only a little, but quite much. [*laughs*] [FI44]

The interviewees mostly considered these kinds of small everyday fights as a normal and unavoidable part of family life. It should be therefore noticed that intergenerational disagreements and conflicts in the families interviewed for the INTERFACE project were, for a largish part, not related to the immigration experience but derived from similar sources as any family's internal problems.

When not speaking about small everyday fights, the interviewees often described the disagreements between generations as temporary matters, typically connected with the children's age. Both the young generation and their parents considered especially teenage or puberty a time period, which typically included questioning of authorities and tradition and consequent conflicts with parents. Also the immigration experience and feelings of displacement can in the beginning create stress and resentment towards parents for the young people. A 15-year-old boy with Ecuadorian origin, currently living Italy (I-26) reported having previously misbehaved badly both at home and in school, due to uneasiness caused by immigration, of which he had blamed her mother. Although having been shocked by the behaviour of his Italian peers towards their parents, he had adopted the very same manners with his mother, in order to express his discontentment. The situation had been difficult for the mother as well, who felt herself poorly equipped to handle her son's behaviour. All of this had nevertheless remained a temporary phase, as the son had found satisfying social contacts and started to feel more at home in Italy. At the moment of the interviews, the son's and mother's feelings were characterised by mutual affection and reciprocity.

As several studies have shown before, a majority of the immigrant parents considered transferring at least certain parts of their cultural heritage, values and habits to their children a matter of great

importance. However, instead of simply adopting the cultural repertoires of their parents, children and adolescents engage in a cultural dialogue with the multiplicity of forces that represent different values, norms and ways of living (see chapter 3.2 below). When creating the space and culture of their own, the young immigrants' questioning of pre-existing norms does not leave the cultural and ethnic traditions untouched. Young people with an immigrant background are in many cases more willing than their parents to adopt different behaviours or patterns common in the receiving society. (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001; Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001.) Problems may arise when parents encourage their children to pick up certain cultural competencies from the receiving society, such as the language and education, while seeing other attitudes and behaviours undesirable. Thus, the conceptions of young people and their parents about how much bending the previous cultural practices was appropriate or where should the borderlines be drawn were not always congruent.

What was considered right or wrong, appropriate or not, was also varying from family to family and a question of negotiation and change. The cultural negotiations tended to be more pronounced in the families whose cultural background was far from the culture of receiving society. The controversial issues were related to questions such as the children's recreational activities, social circles and appearance among others. Many parents expected their children to participate in the housework or taking care of their younger siblings. Children's and young people's reluctance to carry out these responsibilities and claims to have more freedom and leisure time then caused disagreements between the generations.

For example, 16- and 21-year-old sisters with a Somali origin, currently living in Finland, told vivid stories about negotiations they had previously gone through inside their family, concerning mostly the curfews and clothing:

> Daughter (16): When I was 15, I was like crazy, when she [the mother] came and said to me, I always left, like, I came back home from the movies at midnight. That, I came by night bus, and I was only, like coming to 15. Then, where we come from, it's, even though it's a big girl she can't come at this time. Then, she [her mother] was mad and everything, and I was like, I was in a huff for two days, I thought that yeah hey, I want to have good time too and everything. […]
> Daughter (21): But we have a good rule, that when one girl makes a mistake, then the three others and mother are all over her, then she doesn't want to make that mistake again. When she knows that everybody is against her. She won't dare! [*laughs*] […]
> Daughter (16): First, I thought it's just mom, that mom is older, outdated. Then I saw my own sisters who were yelling at me, even the one who is one year older than me, she, too, was saying that "hey I haven't done anything that bad", then I was like, oh, it was quite bad… […] And also about clothes, there were a lot of disagreements. [MP Oh.] When style, when style was, like, we don't use trousers, but we use long boot up 'til here [shows with her hand], then a skirt 'til here, and then the scarf like this, the hair showing a little bit from behind and everything… Then you look stylish, then earrings, necklaces and then we walk… mom was, like, "what is this?". Like, "where's your scarf, why this… why don't you just put trousers on?" Well, then I was just, "well, trousers are, I don't like them". [laughs] She was, "oh, you put that, you don't even think about the religion, go ahead, take all your clothes off, don't care", that "you're not going out like that, it's better you go naked than you go like that". I was, like, "aaargh, mom, can't you see how stylish I am, look at me!" [laughs] That, "I can't take this away", we were always fighting. […][FI48]

In the sisters' story, the importance of the opinion of siblings is worth noticing. When telling about the negotiations about the curfew, the sisters' opinion had had more weight for the youngest daughter, since she considered her mother's opinion old-fashioned and therefore of lesser significance. The front lines in these negotiations therefore do not necessarily follow generational lines, but also the young interviewees may defend the cultural traditions of the country of origin against those who question them.

Nevertheless, the changing behaviour of children did not always become a matter of conflict inside the families. Some parents showed a great deal of understanding towards the different perception of appropriate behaviour their children had adopted, pointing out that the children have grown up in the middle of a very different culture and that they needed in some extent adopt similar behaviour

with their peers in order to "fit in". The parents often told they "felt weird" or had ambivalent feelings about their children's changed behaviour, but however, understood that acting differently would be alien to them. A father with Kurdish origin explains:

> For example, in our country, our culture, that, like, some old people are sitting somewhere, so children can't, should not, there, like sit with their feet before them like this. *[shows with his position, sit with soles in sight]*. I mean, you were supposed to sit nicely. […] These now, they don't exist, that, even if we had guests and we, my big girl, she can lay here [*laughs*] on the couch. No, we feel this is a little… impolite, but for her it's maybe not. Because she has learned it from her environment here in Finland. [FI51]

Whether changes in behaviour become subjects of negotiations or causes for conflicts depends also on which habits the children have adopted and which habits of the culture of origin the parents consider important enough to be respected.

In any case, the immigration context seems to bring about an accentuated need for parents to negotiate about boundaries and cultural practices with their children. Communication and openness were among central themes when speaking about well-being of family and preserving good relationships inside the family and especially the parents in many cases brought up communication as a prerequisite for the successful preservation of a good parent-child relationship. The more negotiative style in bringing up the children meant that the parents could not dictate the rules, but they needed to respect their children and their opinions and, if and when disagreements arose, explain and give well-grounded reasons for certain practices and limitations, but also make some concessions. For some parents, the more liberal atmosphere in the receiving country was even a relief, had they considered their own youth as too restricted. A mother with Kurdish origin, currently living in Finland, stressed that it was good to give her children certain amount of freedom and trust them to use it right, especially when they were little older, such as in late adolescence:

> In Iran, I've had a good family, liberal even, but nevertheless, this social life, we couldn't be free there, we couldn't enjoy our youth. But here we have the opportunity for that and… if… we discuss and I give her the freedom and she can behave herself, quite well. I don't need to worry how to solve… if something comes up, then we discuss, that let's do it like this. She has the right… young people's time, it goes so fast. You need to enjoy. [FI45]

2.5   High hopes for future: family and schooling

It is not a rare case that after immigration, immigrant parents find themselves on a lower ladder on the social hierarchy than they used to in their country of origin. Among the family stories of INTERFACE project there were plenty of examples of parents who had been unable to find employment, had employed on lower level than their education suggests, were underemployed or worked illegally in poor conditions. The insecure position and low social and economic status leads many immigrant parents to posing their future expectations not on themselves but on their children, who are expected to have more satisfying lives in the receiving society, but also to work hard in order to accomplish the goals and succeed. Almost without exceptions the interviewed parents saw education as the key to successful life in the receiving society and thus often considered their children's schoolwork a matter of great importance. (See also Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, 23; Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004.) Due to their importance, school and educational plans of the children and young people and negotiations concerning these were frequently discussed topics in the interviews. They also proved to sometimes having been among topics of negotiations and disagreements between the generations.

While emphasising the importance of education was more dominant in the speech of parents, the majority of young people shared the viewpoint. Education was understood to be the prerequisite for satisfactory life in the receiving society, providing better employment possibilities both in the sense of more meaningful work and better salary, but also self-development. Besides being a means for upward social mobility and better socioeconomic status, school as everyday surroundings forms an important social sphere for children and young people, given that they spend more time in school than in any other setting outside their homes (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Tolonen 2001). Thus its role in progressing the social integration and creation of social networks is significant as well.

Additionally, some of the young interviewees seemed to consider succeeding in school a way to compensate or repay the sacrifices their parents had made for them by deciding to migrate (DE12, CR54, FI47). The feeling of being obliged to fulfil their parents' expectations was thus not alien to the young generation. According to Lauglo (2000), parents of cohesive immigrant families, often emphasising the tradition of strong familial ties and parental authority, are well equipped to support their young members in maintaining constructive engagement in school. For the children and young people their parents' sharp focus on educational success means having parents who are keen to support and spur them on in schoolwork and on educational careers. It is thus not surprising that in the vast majority of the families examined here, the young generation had, after finishing the compulsory education, sought their ways to various forms of further education and quite often up to higher education.

Nevertheless, parental expectations and everyday life in school may also prove to be problematic for the young people. If considered too great or being of different quality than their own wishes, the parents' anticipations may be a source of stress and anxiety for the young people (see also Portes & Rumbaut 2001). A 12-year-old boy with a Russian background, currently living in Finland, has complaints on his parents' expectations:

> Son: Well, yes, they do affect [on me] quite much, and it also irritates me, that they'd like me to become somebody, like, a rich and good person.
> Interviewer: I see. And what kind of person you'd like to become yourself?
> Son: Well, sure I'd like to be rich, like evertbody else. Well, but… I don't always want to be the way they tell me to be. [FI43]

Additionally, the limited language skills and knowledge about the education system in the receiving society act as constraint for the parents to offer concrete help with schoolwork and decisions concerning education (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, 56). A 17-year-old girl with Kurdish origin, currently living in Finland, describes her difficulties in school as follows:

> […] I've had problems with language in lower level of comprehensive school, and also upper level, and sometimes I have those in upper secondary school as well. Because I have nobody who'd help me with, for example, English language. Because my parents weren't taught that in Iran. Or, Swedish, or French, somehow I feel that I must do, like, in principle, twice as much work. […] I remember, sometimes in lower level of comprehensive school, I sometimes just cried because, I couldn't, like, do the homework because nobody at home could help me. So… yes, it has shown, that I'm not quite in the same position as them [*Finnish born Finns*], that… they can ask help at home, and like this, but, I've always had to do everything like that alone. […] If I had had somebody, a big sister or… well, now I can help my little brother now that I have gone through that, but back then… nobody helped me. [FI44]

Thus, the offspring of immigrant parents may have to survive on their own with both the expectations of their parents and the heavy workload given by the school. For the young interviewees, school was also the most typical environment for racist and prejudiced encounters, which contributes to increased distress as well (Rastas 2007).

3   CULTURAL IDENTITIES
    ON THE MOVE

Family is an important sphere of social interaction through which people reproduce and negotiate ethnic and cultural values (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000; Honkasalo et al. 2007, 21). Since family is the unit that signifies continuity in the migration process and is the place where familiar habits and items are preserved, it seems natural that family is also the place to nurture the minority identity. In the family sphere, the interviewees cherished their minority identity for example by speaking their native language, eating "own food", watching the television channels of country of origin, celebrating the feasts of culture of origin and keeping in contact with relatives and other people with the same ethnic background. However, the generations often differed from each other markedly in regard to the extent in which they sought to hold on to the habits of culture of origin and in how important role the ethnic background played in identity reconstruction. In the vast majority of cases it was the parents who had remained more deeply rooted to the culture of country of origin, while their children generally, especially as time passes by, tended to orientate more towards the receiving society. (See also Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, 79; Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001, 132.)

3.1   Language

Speaking one's own language at home was maybe the most obvious feature through which minority ethnicity was built up and consolidated in the everyday life of the interviewees. In the majority of families examined here, the native language was used at home, especially between the parents and the children (24 out of 35 used the native language, 10 used both the native language and the language of receiving society). The parents particularly stressed the importance of preserving the native language. They showed often concern if there were signs of their children's skills in the native language eroding and felt disappointed if they failed in motivating the children to preserve it. (See also Al-Ali 2002, 91–92.) The use of native language was not only a question of preserving the cultural heritage – in many cases it was also a necessity due to the parents' limited knowledge of language of receiving country. If both generations understood both languages but were differently equipped in using them, it was also possible that the parents communicated in the language of country of origin and their children in the language of receiving society. Only in one case, the family had abandoned their native language and were using the language of the receiving society exclusively.

The young interviewees mostly saw bilingualism as a major advantage, especially in finding employment. Nevertheless, attempts to preserve fluency in native language were not necessarily easy. With time, the younger generation tended to start speaking the language of receiving country at home as well, at least when communicating with siblings. Some of them had even declined from using the native language due to attempts to be like natives in the receiving country, though this was rare. Concerned parents disliked the tendency and in a few families (DE14, FI51), had even given clear rules concerning the use of native language and not the language of receiving country at home.

3.2. Reconstructing identities

The parents' memories and stories about their country of origin were a central source of information for the children and young people. These stories also carried emotional meanings, the country of origin commonly being coloured with positive and longing shades. While many young interviewees in some extent shared the positive picture of their (parents') country of origin, the parents' enthusiasm to pass on the cultural heritage and longing was not always resulted in their children getting interested as well. Instead, the young generation tended to remain more oriented towards the receiving country than their parents, in some (albeit rather rare) cases even making a clear break with their parents' country of origin and its culture.

It seemed rather common that especially during their early adolescence the young interviewees were willing to try the behaviour models of their peers in the receiving country and make a distinction from their parents' traditions. In this age, being in transition from childhood to adulthood, young people in Western countries generally start to identify more with their peers than their family and to create and search for their own cultural space. Also the growing questioning of the parents' authority is typically connected with this age. (See also Harinen et al. 2005, 285–286.) For young people with an immigrant background, this questioning may thus easily transfer into questioning the importance of cultural background, especially if the environment's attitudes towards people with different ethnic backgrounds are negative or pressure to "be like the others" is high among peers. A 15-year-old girl with Kurdish background, living currently in Belgium, thus claims:

> Here, there are two cultures, some of my friends are sometimes different from me and sometimes I want to be like them and when I say that to my parents they are a little bit shocked. […] They always say I have to be like a Turkish girl and I want to be like a Belgian one. [BE74]

However, when getting older, many of the young interviewees had started to value and foster their ethnic background and the culture related to it – like a 21-year-old young man with a Vietnamese background, living in the Czech Republic, who had only after a recent visit to Vietnam started to re-discover and re-value his Vietnamese roots (CR54). Thus the young people's striving for greater assimilation may remain a temporary phase. Also the conflicts between parents and children, if they exist, tend to calm down with time. Yet it is worth noticing that not all young people with an immigrant background feel the need to clash with their parents or question their authority or importance of their culture of origin. It should be borne in mind that adolescence as such is in a large extent a Western construction and people with different cultural backgrounds do not necessarily experience this transition in the same way.

Even though it was a common pattern that the parents had remained more rooted to their culture of origin, while their children were more willing to adopt features of the culture of the receiving country, this was not always the case. Difficult experiences prior to the immigration may have led the parents to wanting to make a clear distinction from the country of origin, at least on level of rhetoric if not in practice. Their children may nevertheless adopt a more positive attitude towards their parents' country of origin and experience their ethnic background as an enriching part of their identities. Due to often having more multifaceted knowledge about the receiving society, the children and young people may also be better equipped than their parents to express critical notions about certain mechanisms of the receiving society. For example regarding prejudices and discrimination, children and young people sometimes seemed to be more sensitive in perceiving and recognizing subtler forms of differentiation and racism, since they have more knowledge and experiences of the receiving society (FI44, CR63).

For young people with a different ethnic and cultural background from that of the mainstream

society's, finding their own space and ways to be accepted is often not easy, but demands a lot of struggling and negotiations. As Harinen and her colleagues (2005) have stated, different memberships and integration into a society are not static positions that can be acquired once and for all through formal citizenship, educational certification or employment. Instead, they are continuous processes of creation, negotiation and struggle, an ever ongoing form of interaction. Daily contests of social and cultural recognition, normative struggles related to different lifestyles, group belonging and feelings of solidarity or loneliness are all part of these processes. (Harinen et al. 2005, 283; see also Honkatukia & Suurpää 2006, 5.) A 16-year-old girl with a Somali background, living in Finland, described how she, too, had lately been more able to locate herself in the cultural landscape of Finland, along with the growing number of different subcultures. The quote nonetheless reveals that the room for negotiating about the borderlines of socially accepted identities in Finland is not that great:

> […]Like, nowadays you get your own space here a little quicker. Here in Finland. […] In the same way I we-, I go to Vero Moda, I take the same, like, shirts and these, but then I just put them on with a different style. And styles, now, I can imagine, the heavy metal diggers, hiphop and these have appeared, so then I can go as well, like, aargh, there is only just room for me. To do it in my own way. And that is, it is really nice. [FI48]

The children and young people are thus also important and active carriers of the culture of their or their parents' country of origin. While the parents may be, and often are, significant sources for learning traditions, norms and values of the country of origin, the children and young people are not merely receiving influences from them and responding to them. Neither they are acquiring the elements of the new culture as such. Instead they are combining multiple sources of information and selectively adopting, moulding and remoulding these pieces when constructing their ethnic identities. Thus, their cultural and ethnic identities represent both change and stability, resistance and adaptation. (See also Pels & de Haan 2007; Evergeti & Zontini 2006.)

3.3   Hybrid identities?

While some of the young interviewees reported they felt themselves as nationals of the receiving country or nationals of their country of origin, the majority of them were reluctant to give any label for their national identity. Many brought actively up that they resisted the idea of being or becoming nationals of the receiving country, seeing their ethnic background and its characteristics too great a difference between them and the other nationals. At the same time, many of them nevertheless recognized such many new features in their lives that they did not quite feel their nationality of origin as appropriate in describing them either. Thus, the young interviewees were clearly beyond the either/or-thinking. When accepting some labels, they were typically overlapping and situational. Often it was the case that while the ethnic origin was more dominant at home and with the family, the part of identity more attached to the receiving country became more clearly visible when socializing outside the home. A mother and her 19-year-old daughter, with Russian origin and living in Finland, discuss:

> Mother: I would like to ask [her daughter], what she feels, does she feel like Finnish or Russian?
> Daughter: I'm of no nationality. […] Well, it's hard to tell… I do have the Finnish citizenship. And of course, I live, I've lived in Finland for fifteen years. Nevertheless, it's like, I speak more Russian, like, between us and more my friends are Russians, so… […] I cannot say. Fifty-fifty.
> Mother: Well, for example,… if there is an ice-hockey game. Russia and Finland. Whose side are you on?
> Daughter: Eh, if I watch it at home, with my parents, or with my Russian friends, then of course it's Russia. But if I watch it with Finnish people [*mother laughs*], then, yes, yes, I'm on the side of the Finns. [*both laugh*][FI44]

The concept of a hybrid is sometimes used when referred to phenomena that combine elements from several sources that are previously thought to be separate. A hybrid is the result of combining these elements and cannot simply be restored to the previous elements. (Huttunen et al. 2005, 30.) While ethnic identities are never static positions or possessions, hybridity illustrates the nature of the young interviewees' ethnic identities felicitously, since it refers to creative and qualitatively new combinations and absence of clear definitions. Inability or reluctance to place oneself under one or another label is not to be considered as a sign of weakness or insecurity. Instead, deriving from various sources when building one's ethnic identity can be enriching and empowering.

The hybridity of identity of the young people with an immigration background is more pronounced and visible than their parents', though no static or unchanging identities or cultures exist. It would be an oversimplification to claim that immigrant parents stick to the culture of origin whereas young people with an immigrant background tend to merge into their ethnic identities elements from culture of receiving country as well. While the parents' ethnic identity may not be as strongly in the state of coming as their offspring's, they similarly approve some features of the culture of receiving country while rejecting others. Similarly, they choose what parts of their culture of their origin they consider worth cherishing and what parts they want to ignore or forget. Thus, the parents' unique combination of interpretations of both cultures influence on what kind of cultural norms and models they pass on to their children to reconstruct. The responses to the challenge of combining two cultures are multiple, and both parents and their children use heterogeneous strategies when constructing their ethnic identities, according to the different resources they are holding.

The hybridity of ethnic identity of the young generation was acknowledged and in most cases approved by the parents as well. When settling down in the new country, they had come to accept the fact that their children were most likely to adopt elements of the new culture in their lives. (What elements and in what extent, still remained under discussion.) Many parents brought up that there was a whole wide society around their children and thus the influence of home only is bound to be limited. A mother of three daughters, originating in Kenya, explains:

> […] If I am going to holiday I want to go to Kenya, anyway. And, eh, I talk to them a lot about Kenya and… but I still can't control. Because the society is big. This house, it can't be Kenya, no. Because, there is little culture, Kenyan culture, in this house, and that starts with me. But then, they are out there, they're in school, they have friends from different nationalities, mostly Finnish. They are in school, they study Finnish, everything is Finnish. So I cannot say they would grow more Kenyan than Finnish now. And honestly, if they are growing up the, eh, they just have to be, behaved, that's all. I don't mind they get the Finnish.. way of… growing up, I don't see anything wrong with that. [FI42]

What the parents were hoping for was that their children would keep appreciating their ethnic background and would combine the positive elements of both cultures in their lives – what ever this meant depended on the speaker. The immigration and combining the two cultures were seen to bring not only difficulties but also new kind of multiplicity and richness in the lives of their children.

4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1 Intergenerational relations and social capital

In conclusion, family and relationships with parents can and should be seen as a central factor influencing the well-being of young people with an immigrant background. Emotional support provided by parents appeared as the core element of family's positive influence for young interviewees. The parents typically gave reasons for many of their life decisions, including the decision of migrating, on the basis of well-being and better opportunities of their children, and often saw the future as well with their children as a point of reference. For both parents and their children, intergenerational relationships can additionally provide for social contacts, a context for fostering minority identity and economic help.

In general, intergenerational relations in the families interviewed in the context of INTERFACE project were constructive, warm and characterised by mutual affection and support. As every family, these families had disagreements and conflicts between the parents and children, but by and large these were temporary and overcome rather successfully. When there were specific problems that resulted from the immigration experience and post-migration situation, they concerned mostly questions of combining the two cultures, the parents wanting to preserve the values and habits of the country of origin and the children and young people adopting more liberal models of behaviour of the receiving country. In overcoming these, open communication was given a central role. The immigration context was seen to bring about an accentuated need to negotiate about boundaries and cultural practices with children. Communication and openness in general appeared to be among central themes when considering well-being of a family and good intergenerational relationships. Open communication can be seen as a prerequisite for successful preservation of a working parent-child relationship, providing a means to keep up on what the other family members are going through and to prevent problems before they emerge or culminate.

Since the family can be considered the provider of many resources individuals utilize also outside the family sphere, the multiple influences of family on the individual family members can also be approached with the concept of social capital. The concept has become a widely used tool both in social sciences and policy making. It has multiple meanings according to different theoretical approaches, but refers generally to "the values that people hold and the resources they can access, which both result in and are the result of collective and socially negotiated ties and relationships" (Edwards et al. 2003, 2). Ethnicity is, for greater part, ignored in mainstream social capital literature, and even when it is mentioned, it is mostly in relation to the lack of social capital due to migration. In the field of ethnic and migration studies, however, ethnicity is seen as a resource and a potential source of social capital. For example, positive adaptation and upward social mobility among immigrants has been explained with the concept. (Evergeti & Zontini 2006, 1028.)

Family networks are crucial for maintaining and generating social capital (Edwards et al. 2003). Social capital can be divided into three levels: bonding, bridging and linking social capital, each of which offers different kinds and amounts of resources. Bonding social capital refers to strong networks, shared norms and values, and it acts as a source of psychological strength. Due to its role as a community with strong ties and shared culture, norms, values and history, family can be considered a central source of this type of social capital. (Evergeti & Zontini 2006, 1028; Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, 52, 66.) Besides acting as supportive element, bonding social capital may also turn to be restrictive, if family norms are rigid or tie (young) individuals to certain patterns. Nevertheless,

even though being experienced as a constraint by some, for the majority bonding social capital provided by family networks is used as a solid base from which to bridge out to new networks. (See also Holland et al. 2007.)

In contrast with the picture sometimes drawn about immigrant families as units restricting the lives of their young members and arenas for intergenerational conflicts, the data points more on the direction of family as a unit with a strong sense of mutual trust and support, providing an arena of learning, negotiating and renegotiating on cultural patterns, identities and everyday life practices. While the parents' influence on the well-being of children and young people as sources of support, spur and safety is of central importance, this study also underlines the active role that children and young people have in producing and maintaining social capital in their personal and family life. Deriving from their own resources, beliefs and values, all the parents in the data were offering their children emotional support, spurring them on in education and giving advice according to their best knowledge. Besides this, active and well-integrated parents may also provide their children with contacts and other social, cognitive or economic resources to reach further. This nevertheless requires information, understanding the workings of the receiving society, language skills and social networks. Thus it is the case in many families with an immigration background, that the parents' ability to offer help and advice in the practical level is somewhat limited. However, the children and young people show a remarkable capability to generate and utilize their own social networks in school and in recreational activities in order to gain knowledge, construct their identity and attain different memberships in the society.

The main stream of social capital literature considers children and young people predominantly passive recipients of benefits of parental social capital, rather than active producers or consumers in their own right. Putnam (2000), for example, emphasises the importance of parental social capital, but ignores the influence of children's own networks and their ability to generate and utilise social capital. Additionally, many dominant writers fail to examine how young people utilise social capital as a resource in ethnic identity formation or indeed how ethnic identity is a product of social capital. However, the young people are active agents in the production of social capital and they use social capital as a social resource to negotiate transitions in their lives and the construction of identity. (Holland et al. 2007.)

4.2   Prerequisites for constructive intergenerational relations

Combining two cultures proved to be a central topic of negotiations between the generations. Children's and young people's quick and thorough adopting of habits of the receiving society was sometimes experienced threatening by parents and caused therefore conflicts in some families. Even though the parents had to accept certain changes in their children's behaviour and attitudes anyway, it seemed to be that often the most constructive and harmonious parent-child-relationships prevailed in families in which the children and young people were in some extent fostering the elements or values of their (parents') cultures of origin as well. According to Portes and Rumbaut (2001), children and young people who learn the language and culture of the new country without losing those of the old have much better understanding of their place in the world. They do not need to clash with their parents as often or feel embarrassed by them because they are able to bridge the gap across generations and value their elders' traditions and goals.

Portes and Rumbaut are thus emphasising the benefits of so called selective acculturation, that is, the type of integration that allows people to preserve the ethnic identity of their culture of origin

and habits attached to it while integrating into the mainstream society. While families or co-ethnic communities may encourage their children and young people in fostering both cultural traditions, socially and politically supportive environment for preserving features of the culture of origin is an important prerequisite as well. (Portes & Rumbaut 2001, 274–275.) Thus it is a challenge for the receiving societies and their immigration policies, if they want to promote the well-being of immigrant families and enable them to preserve well-functioning intergenerational relations, to support attitude environment that allows and encourages the preservation of immigrants' cultures of origin. For instance, in Finland the official integration policy has defined its objective integration just in this sense, as a process that enables immigrants to participate in the society and the labour market, while simultaneously being able to preserve their own culture and language (Integration Act 493/1999). Yet it remains under dispute how well these words manifest themselves in practice. According to Suurpää (2002, 50), immigrants paradoxically face simultaneously demands of both difference and similarity. While the right to preserve the culture of origin and its habits is not denied, exercising these is supposed to be restricted mostly to the private sphere (ibid.; Lepola 2000, 211–216). Family may be the most central context for fostering the minority identity, but it would be worth discussing, how the receiving societies could be more open to accept difference in public sphere as well.

As is pointed out in the results of focus group interviews of INTERFACE project as well, it is crucial to take into account the interrelatedness of individual family members' integration when considering the prerequisites of immigrant families' well-being. It was illustrated by several family stories about how the young family members, being best acquainted with the workings of receiving society and best equipped to act in it, carry many times responsibilities of progressing their parents' integration and indeed helping them to cope with everyday social situations. While a responsible and helpful attitude towards one's parents can be considered a positive characteristic, in many cases the emotional, social and cognitive load carried by the young people seems enormous, taken into consideration their young age and other responsibilities and challenges they need to face also outside their homes. Also dissonant acculturation and role reversal may lead to withering away the parental authority and thus complicated intergenerational relations.

On these grounds, it is another challenge of receiving societies and their immigration policies to pay attention to that not only one or some of the family members would get contacts with the receiving society but all of them. If the parents do not properly know the environment they are living in, they are bound to be more poorly equipped to support and guide their children in the choices they need to make. While children and young people do have and create their own networks and resources, parental support remains nevertheless of central importance. For parents, employment is a central context to create social contacts, gain knowledge about the receiving society and a source of feelings of belonging and being valuable, and thus promoting the employment opportunities of immigrants is to be supported. Nevertheless, also the groups outside the work force, such as house wives and the elderly, require consideration and supportive and integrative measures according to their special needs (Mikkonen 2005).

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APPENDIX

Interview themes

Themes agreed with all partners of INTERFACE project (to be covered in the first interview)
- Tell me about your family / Tell the story of your family (narration)
- How a family changes after migration? OR How yout experience regarding migration changed after having a family?
- How do you see your individual situation in the receiving country at the moment?
- How do you see the future of your family?

+ basic facts if not otherwise brought up: country of origin, length of stay in the receiving country, reasons for migration, native language, intentions to return or settle down permanently, composition of family, current status of family members, changes in statuses of family members and composition of family, religious background

Other themes discussed in the interviews in Finland (questions are suggestive)

Narration
- Moving in Finland
- The first times in Finland: what was hard? What was easy?
- Who or what helped you to settle down?

Family relations (in Finland)
- How would you describe your relationship with your mother/father/siblings/children?
- What kinds of things you do together?
- What kinds of things you discuss about?
- What kinds of things cause disagreements or quarrels?
- Do you think your mother/father/sibling/child has influenced your life? How?
- Do you have other relatives living nearby? Who
- Do you keep in contact with them? What do you do together?

Transnational relations
- Do you still have many relatives in your country of origin? Or elsewhere?
- Do you keep in contact with them? How? How often?
- Do you visit them? Do they visit you?
- Have you visited your country of origin? Tell me about the visit.
- Do you experience the separation from your relatives/friends hard?
- Do your relatives outside Finland affect your life?

For the parents
- Is bringing up children different in Finland than in your country of origin? How?
- What are the values (traditions, habits, behaviour etc.) you especially want to pass on to your children?
- Is it important that the children would preserve features of your culture of origin?
- Is it easy/hard to bring up your children according to your principles?
- What are your constraints and resources in upbringing?

For the children and young people
- Have your parents told you a lot about your/their country of origin? Are you interested in hearing?
- Are you interested in the culture of your (parents') country of origin?
- Do you think your parents have a lot of power over you?
- Do you think parents should have a lot of power over their children?

Culture
- Which features you consider important to preserve from your culture of origin?
- Which features you value in the Finnish culture?
- What kinds of changes you have noticed in your own life / in your own behaviour? How your family is reacting in these?
- What do you think about gender roles / gender equality in Finland?

Religion (only if relevant to the interviewees)
- What your religion means to you?
- How does it affect in your (daily) life?
- Is it easy to practice your religion the way you want in Finland?

Citizenship/national and ethnic identity
- Do you feel yourself as a Finnish / a national of your country of origin?
- In which situations you feel yourself as Finnish / a national of your country of origin?
- Do you think you are in equal position with native Finns?

Work
- Do you work? Where? How long have you worked there? How did you find your job?
- Do you like your work? Why?
- Is it hard to find work in Finland?
- Unemployment: for how long, how do you feel about it?
- What do you hope for future regarding work?

School
- Which grade are you on? Where you study
- Do you like school? What do you like? What you don't? Why?
- Do you have many friends in school?
- Is there bullying going on in your school?
- What would you like to do after (this) school?

Leisure time
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- Where you usually spend time?
- Do you have hobbies?
- Why you like your hobby?
- Have you found friends through your hobby?

Social spheres
- Do you have a lot of friends?
- What do you like to do with your friends?
- In which situations you make new friends?
- Is it easy/hard to get to know people in Finland?
- Are your friends mostly Finnish / from your country of origin / other nationals?
- Is it important to have friends with the same ethnic background?

Discrimination and racism
- Have you been treated differently in comparison with native Finns (because of your ethnic origin, language, skin colour etc.)? How? When?
- Have you told about it to anyone?
- Do you think there is a lot of racism / prejudices towards non-nationals?
- Have you talked about racist encounters with your family members?